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AN
INQUIRY, &c.



AN
INQUIRY
INTO THE
LITERARY AND POLITICAL CHARACTER
OF
James the First.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
CURIOSITIES OF LITERATURE, &c. &c.

BEATI PACIFICI. *The King's Motto.*

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The whole reign of James I. has been represented by a late celebrated pen (Burnet) to have been a continued course of mean practices; and others, who have professedly given an account of it, have filled their works with *Libel* and *Invective*, instead of *History*. Both King James and his ministers have met with a treatment from posterity highly unworthy of them, and those, who have so liberally bestowed their censures, were entirely ignorant of the true springs and causes of the actions they have undertaken to represent. *Sawyer's Preface to Winwood's Memorials.*

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE present inquiry originates in an affair of literary conscience. Many years ago I set off in the world with the popular notions of the character of James I.; but in the course of study, and with a more enlarged comprehension of the age, I was frequently struck by the contrast of his real with his apparent character ; and I thought I had developed those hidden and involved causes which have so long influenced modern writers in ridiculing and vilifying this monarch.

This historical trifle is therefore neither a hasty decision, nor a designed inquiry ; the results gradually arose through successive periods of time, and were it worth the while, the history of my thoughts, in my own publications might be arranged in a sort of chronological conviction.

I will not suffer a cowardly silence to warn me from encountering all that popular prejudice and party-feeling may oppose ; and this were incompatible with that constant search after Truth, and the independence of its character, which we may at least expect from the retired student.

I had originally limited this Inquiry to the *literary* character of the monarch ;

but there was a secret connection between that and his political conduct ; and that again led me to examine the manners and temper of the times, with the effects which a peace of more than twenty years operated on the nation. I hope that the freshness of the materials, often drawn from contemporary writings which have never been published, may in some respect gratify curiosity. Of the *political* character of James I. opposite tempers will form opposite opinions ; the friends of peace and humanity will consider that the greatest happiness of the people is that of possessing a philosopher on the throne ; but let profounder inquirers hereafter discover why those princes are

suspected of being but weak men, who are the true fathers of their people; let them too inform us, whether we are to ascribe to James I. as well as to Marcus Antoninus, the disorders of their reign, or place them to the ingratitude and wantonness of mankind.

11th *April*, 1816.

I. D'ISRAELI.

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AN
INQUIRY, &c.

IF sometimes the learned entertain false opinions, and traditionary prejudices, as well as the people, they however preserve among themselves a paramount love of truth, and the means to remove errors, which have escaped their scrutiny. The occasion of such errors may be complicate, but usually, it is the arts and passions of the few which find an indolent acquiescence

among the many ; and firm adherents among those, who so eagerly consent to what they do not dislike to hear.

A remarkable instance of this appears in the character of James I. which lies buried under a heap of ridicule and obloquy ; yet James I. was a literary monarch at one of the great æras of English literature, and his contemporaries were far from suspecting that his talents were inconsiderable, even among those who had their reasons not to like him. The degradation which his literary character has suffered, has been inflicted by more recent hands ; and it may startle the last echoer of Pope's " Pedant-reign," to hear that more wit and wisdom have been

recorded of James I. than of any one of our sovereigns.

An “ Author-Sovereign,” as Lord Shaftesbury, in his anomalous but emphatic style, terms this class of writers, is placed between a double eminence of honours, and must incur the double perils ; he will receive no favour from his brothers, the *Faineants*, as a whole race of cyphers in succession on the throne of France were denominated, and who find it much more easy to despise than to acquire ; while his other brothers, the republicans of literature want a heart to admire the man who has resisted the perpetual seductions of a court-life for the silent labours of his closet. Yet if Alphonsus of Arragon

be still a name endeared to us for his love of literature, and for that elegant testimony of his devotion to study expressed by the device on his banner of *an open book*, how much more ought we to be indulgent to the memory of a sovereign who has written one, still worthy of being opened?

We must separate the literary from the political character of this monarch, and the qualities of his mind and temper from the ungracious and neglected manners of his personal one. And if we do not take a more familiar view of the events, the parties, and the genius of the times, the views and conduct of James I. will still remain imperfectly comprehended. In the reign of a

prince who was no military character, we must busy ourselves at home ; the events he regulated, may be numerous, and even interesting, although not those which make so much noise and shew in the popular page of history, and escape us in its general views. The want of this sort of knowledge has proved to be one great source of the false judgments passed on this monarch. Surely it was not philosophical to decide of another age by the changes and the feelings through which our own had passed. There is a chronology of human opinions which unobserved, an indiscreet philosopher may commit an anachronism in reasoning.

When the Stuarts became the ob-

jects of popular indignation, a peculiar race of libels was eagerly dragged into light, assuming the imposing form of history ; many of these state-libels did not even pass through the press, and may occasionally be discovered in their MS. state. Yet these publications cast no shade on the *talents* of James I. His literary attainments were yet undisputed ; they were echoing in the ear of the writers, and many proofs of his sagacity were still lively in their recollections.

Burnet, the ardent champion of a party so deeply concerned to oppose as well the persons as the principles of the Stuarts, levelled the father of the race ; we read with delight pages which

warm and hurry us on, mingling truths with rumours, and known with suggested events, with all the spirit of secret history. But the character of James I. was to pass through the lengthened inquisitorial tortures of the sullen sectarianism of Harris.* It was

* The historical works of Dr. William Harris have been recently republished in a collected form, and they may now be considered as entering into our historical stores.

Harris is a curious researcher, but what appears more striking in his historical character, is the impartiality with which he quotes authorities which make against his own opinions and statements. Yet is Harris a writer likely to impose on many readers. He announces in his title pages that his works are "after the manner of Mr. Bayle." This is but a literary imposition, for Harris is perhaps the meanest writer in our language both for style and philosophical thinking. The extraordinary impartiality he displays in his

branded by the fierce, remorseless republican Catharine Macaulay, and flouted by the light sparkling whig

faithful quotations from writers on opposite sides, is only the more likely to deceive us; for by that unalterable party-feeling which never forsakes him, the facts against him he studiously weakens by doubts, surmises, and suggestions; a character sinks to the level of his notions by a single stroke; and from the arguments adverse to his purpose, he wrests the most violent inferences. All party-writers must submit to practise such mean and disingenuous arts, if they affect to disguise themselves under a cover of impartiality. Bayle, intent on collecting facts, was indifferent to their results, but Harris is more intent on the deductions than the facts. The truth is, Harris wrote to please his patron, the republican Hollis, who supplied him with books, and every friendly aid. "It is possible for an ingenious man to be of a *party* without being *partial*," says Rushworth; an airy clench on the lips of a sober matter-of-fact-man looks suspicious; and betrays the weak pang of a half-conscience.

Horace Walpole.* A senseless cry of pedantry had been raised against him by

* Horace Walpole's character of James I. in his "Royal Authors," is as remarkable as his character of Sir Philip Sidney; he might have written both without any acquaintance with the works he has so maliciously criticised. In his account of Sidney he had silently passed over the "Defence of Poetry;" and in his second edition he makes this insolent avowal; that "he had forgotten it; a proof that I at least did not think it sufficient foundation for so high a character as he acquired." Every reader of taste knows the falseness of the criticism, and how heartless the polished cynicism that could dare it. I repeat, what I have elsewhere said, that Horace Walpole had something in his composition more predominant than his wit, a cold, unfeeling disposition which contemned all literary men, at the moment his heart secretly panted to partake of their fame.

Nothing can be more imposing than his volatile and caustic criticisms on the works of James I.; yet it appears to me that he had never opened

the eloquent invective of Bolingbroke, from whom doubtless Pope echoed it in verse, which has outlived his Lordship's prose.

“ Oh, cried the Goddess, for some pedant reign !
Some gentle James to bless the land again ;
To stick the doctor's chair into the throne,
Give law to words, or war with words alone,
Senates and Courts with Greek and Latin rule,
And turn the Council to a Grammar School !”

Dunciad, B. IV. v. 175.

Few of my readers, I suspect, but have long been persuaded that James I.

that folio volume he so poignantly ridicules. For he doubts whether these two pieces, “ The Prince's Cabala” and “ The Duty of a King in his Royal Office,” were genuine productions of James I. The truth is, they are both nothing more than extracts printed with those separate titles, drawn from the King's Basilicon Doron. He had probably neither read the extracts, nor

was a mere college pedant, and that all his works, whatever they may be, are monstrous pedantic labours. Yet this monarch of all things detested pedantry, either as it shews itself in the mere form of Greek and Latin ; or in ostentatious book-learning ; or in the affectation of words of remote signification ; these are the only points of view in which I have been taught to consider

the original. Thus singularity of opinion, vivacity of ridicule, and polished epigrams in prose, were the means by which this noble writer startled the world by his paradoxes, and at length lived to be mortified at a reputation which he sported with, and lost. I refer the reader to those extracts from his MS. letters which are in " Calamities of Authors," where he has made his literary confessions, and performs his act of penance.

the meaning of the term pedantry, which is very indefinite, and always a relative one.

The age of James I. was a controversial age, of unsettled opinions and contested principles ; an age, in which authority is considered as stronger than opinion ; but the vigour of that age of genius was infused into their writings, and those citers, who thus perpetually crowded their margins, were profound and original thinkers. When the learning of a preceding age becomes less recondite, and those principles general which were at first peculiar, are the ungrateful heirs of all this knowledge to reproach the fathers of their literature with pedantry? Lord Boling-

broke has pointedly said of James I. that “ his pedantry was too much even for the age in which he lived.” His Lordship knew little of that glorious age when the founders of our literature flourished. It had been over-clouded by the French court of Charles II., a race of unprincipled wits, and the revolution-court of William, heated by a new faction, too impatient, to discuss those principles of government which they had established. It was easy to ridicule what they did not always understand, and very rarely met with. But men of far higher genius than this monarch, Selden, Usher, and Milton, must first be condemned before this odium of pedantry can attach itself to the plain

and unostentatious writings of James I., who, it is remarkable, has not scattered in them those oratorical periods and elaborate fancies which he indulged in his speeches and proclamations. These loud accusers of the pedantry of James, were little aware that the King has expressed himself with energy and distinctness on this very topic. His Majesty cautions Prince Henry against the use of any “ corrupt leide, as *book-language*, and *pen-and-ink-horn termes*, and least of all, mignard and effeminate ones.” One passage may be given entire as completely refuting a charge so general, yet so unfounded. “ I would also advise you to write in *your own language*, for there is *nothing left to*

be said in Greek and Latine already; and, ynewe (enough) of poore schollers would match you in these languages; and besides that it best becometh a *King*, to purifie and make famous *his owne tongue*; therein he may goe before all his subjects, as it setteth him well to doe in all honest and lawful things.” No scholar of a pedantic taste could have dared so complete an emancipation from ancient, yet not obsolete, prejudices, at a time when many of our own great authors yet imagined there was no fame for an Englishman unless he neglected his maternal language for the artificial labour of the idiom of ancient Rome. Bacon had even his own domestic Essays translated into

Latin; and the King found a courtier-bishop to perform the same task for his Majesty's writings. There was something prescient in this view of the national language, by the King, who contemplated in it those latent powers which had not yet burst into existence. It is evident that the line of Pope is false which describes the King as intending to rule, "senates and courts" by "turning the council to a grammar school."

This censure of the pedantry of James is also connected with those studies of polemical divinity for which the King has incurred so much ridicule from one party, who were not his contemporaries; and such vehement

invective from another, who, to their utter dismay, discovered their monarch descending into their theological gymnasium to encounter them with their own weapons.

The affairs of religion and politics in the reign of James I., as in the preceding one of Elizabeth,* were identified together; nor yet have the same causes in Europe ceased to act, however

* I have more largely entered into the history of the party who attempted to subvert the government in the reign of Elizabeth, and who published their works under the assumed name of Martin Mar-prelate, than had hitherto been done. In our domestic annals that event and those personages, are of some importance and curiosity, but were imperfectly known to the popular writers of our history.—See *Quarrels of Authors*, in the third volume.

changed or modified. The government of James was imperfectly established while his subjects were wrestling with two great factions to obtain the predominance. The Catholics were disputing his title to the crown, which they aimed to carry into the family of Spain, and the Puritans would have abolished even sovereignty itself; these parties indeed were not able to take the field, but all felt equally powerful with the pen. Hence an age of doctrines. When a religious body has grown into power, it changes itself into a political one; the chiefs are flattered by their strength and stimulated by their ambition; but a powerful body in the state cannot remain stationary, and a divided

empire it disdains. Religious controversies have therefore been usually coverings to mask the political designs of the heads of parties.

We smile at James I. threatening the States-general by the English Ambassador about Vorstius, a Dutch professor, who had espoused the doctrines of Arminius, and had also vented some incomprehensible notions of his own respecting the occult nature of the Divinity. He was the head of the Remonstrants, who were at open war with the party called the Contra-Remonstrants. The ostensible subjects were religious doctrines, but the real and concealed one was a struggle between Pensionary Barneveldt, aided by

the French interest, and the Prince of Orange, supported by the English; even to our own days the same opposite interests existed, and betrayed the Republic, although religious doctrines had ceased to be the pretext.*

* Pensionary Barnevelt, in his seventy-second year, was at length brought to the block. Diodati, a divine of Geneva, made a miserable pun on the occasion; he said that “the *Canons* of the Synod of Dort had taken off the head of the Advocate of Holland.” This pun, says Brandt in his curious History of the Reformation, is very injurious to the Synod, since it intimates that the church loves blood. It never entered into the mind of these divines that Barnevelt fell, not by the Synod, but by the Orange and English party prevailing against the French. Lord Hardwicke, a statesman and a man of letters, deeply conversant with secret and public history, is a more able judge than the ecclesiastical historian or the Swiss divine, who could see nothing

What was passing between the Dutch Prince and the Dutch Pensionary was much like what was taking place between the King of England and his own subjects. James I. had to touch with a balancing hand the Catholics and the Non-conformists*—

in the Synod of Dort, but what appeared in it. It is in Lord Hardwicke's Preface to Sir Dudley Carleton's Letters that his Lordship has made this important discovery.

* James did all he could to weaken the Catholic party by dividing them in opinion. When Dr. Reynolds, the head of the Non-conformists, complained to the King, of the printing and dispersing of Popish pamphlets, the King answered, that this was done by a warrant from the court, to nourish the schism between the seculars and Jesuits, which was of great service. Doctor, added the King, you are a better clergyman than statesman.—*Neale's History of the Puritans*, Vol. I. 416, 4to.

to play them one against another ; but there was a distinct end in their views. “ James I.,” says Burnet, “ continued always writing and talking against Popery, but acting for it.” The King and the bishops were probably more tolerant to Monarchists and Prelatists, than to Republicans and Presbyters. When James got nothing but gunpowder and Jesuits from Rome, he was willing enough to banish, or suppress, but the Catholic families were ancient and numerous ; and the most determined spirits which ever subverted a government were Catholic.* Yet what could the King

* The character and demeanour of the celebrated Guy or Guido Fawkes, who appeared first

expect from the party of the Puritans, and their “conceited parity,” as he

before the council under the assumed name of Johnson, I find in a MS. letter of the times, which contains some characteristic touches not hitherto published. This letter is from Sir Edward Hoby to Sir Thomas Edmondes, our ambassador at the Court of Brussels—dated 19 November, 1605. “One Johnson was found in the vault where the Gunpowder Plot was discovered. He was asked if he were sorry? He answered that he was only sorry it had not taken place. He was threatened that he should die a worse death than he that killed the Prince of Orange; he answered, that he could bear it as well. When Johnson was brought to the King’s presence, the King asked him how he could conspire so hideous a treason against his children and so many innocent souls who had never offended him? He answered, that dangerous diseases required a desperate remedy; and he told some of the Scots that his intent was to have blown them back again into Scotland!” —Mordacious Guy Fawkes!

called it, should he once throw himself into their hands, but the fate his son received from them?

In the early stage of the Reformation, the Catholic still entered into the same church with the Reformed; this common union was broken by the impolitical impatience of the Court of Rome, who, jealous of the tranquillity of Elizabeth, hoped to weaken her government by disunion;* but the

* Sir Edward Coke, attorney-general, in the trial of Garnet the Jesuit, says “ There were no Recusants in England—all came to church howsoever Popishly inclined, till the Bull of Pius V. excommunicated and deposed Elizabeth. On this the Papists refused to join in the public service. —*State Trials*, Vol. I. 242.

The Pope imagined, by false impressions he had received, that the Catholic party was strong

Reformed were already separating among themselves by a new race who fancying that their religion was still too Catholic, were for reforming the Reformation. These had most extravagant fancies, and were for modelling the government according to each particular man's notion. Were we to bend to the foreign despotism of the Roman Tiara, or that of the republican rabble of the Presbytery of Geneva?

It was in these times, that James I., a learned prince, applied to polemical enough to prevail against Elizabeth. Afterwards, when he found his error, a dispensation was granted by himself and his successor, that all Catholics might shew outward obedience to Elizabeth till a happier opportunity. Such are Catholic politics and Catholic faith!

cal studies; properly understood, these were in fact political ones. Lord Bolingbroke says; “ He affected more learning than became a King, which he broached on every occasion in such a manner as would have misbecome a school-master.” Would the politician then require a half-learned king, or a king without any learning at all? Our eloquent sophist appears not to have recollected that polemical studies had long with us been considered as royal ones; and that from a slender volume of the sort our sovereigns still derive the regal distinction of “ Defenders of the Faith.” The pacific government of James I. required that the King himself should be a mas-

ter of these controversies to be enabled to balance the conflicting parties ; and none but a learned king could have exerted the industry or attained to the skill.

In the famous conference at Hampton Court which the King held with the heads of the Non-conformists, we see his Majesty conversing sometimes with great learning and sense, but oftener more with the earnestness of a man, than some have imagined comported with the dignity of a crowned head. The truth is, James, like a true student, indulged, even to his dress, an utter carelessness of parade, and there was in his character a constitutional warmth of heart and a jocundity

of temper which did not always adapt it to state-occasions; he threw out his feelings, and sometimes his jests. James, who had passed his youth in a royal bondage, felt that these Non-conformists, while they were debating small points, were reserving for hereafter their great ones; were cloaking their republicanism by their theology, and, like all other politicians, that their ostensible were not their real motives.*

* In political history we usually find that the heads of a party are much wiser than the party themselves, so that, whatever they intend to acquire, their first demands are small; but the honest souls who are only stirred by their own innocent zeal, are sure to complain that their business is done negligently. Should the party at first succeed, then the bolder spirit, which they have disguised or suppressed through

Harris and Neale, with the sectarian spirit, inveigh against James; even Hume, with the philosophy of the eighteenth century, has pronounced that the King was censurable “ for

policy, is left to itself; it starts unbridled and at full gallop. All this occurred in the case of the Puritans. We find that some of the rigid Non-conformists did confess in a pamphlet, “ The Christian’s modest offer of the Silenced Ministers, 1606,” that those who were appointed to speak for them at Hampton Court were *not of their nomination or judgment*; they insisted that these delegates should declare at once against the whole church-establishment, &c. and model the government to each particular man’s notions! But these delegates prudently refused to acquaint the King with the secret opinions of their mad constituents.—*Lansdowne MSS.* 1056, 51.

This confession of the Non-conformists is also acknowledged by their historian Neale, Vol. II. p. 419, 4to. edit.

entering zealously into these frivolous disputes of theology." There is reason to believe that James, as a private student, cared little about them, but as a monarch at that time they gave him many cares. Lord Bolingbroke declares that the King held this conference "in haste to shew his parts." Thus a man of genius substitutes suggestion and assertion for that real knowledge which never reached the writer. In the present instance, it was an attempt of the Puritans to try the King on his arrival in England; they presented a petition for a conference, called "The Millenary Petition,"*

* The petition is given at length in Collier's Eccles. Hist. Vol. II. 672. At this time also the

from a thousand persons supposed to have signed it; the King would not refuse it; but so far from being “ in haste to shew his parts,” that when he discovered their pretended grievances were so futile, “ he complained that he had been troubled with such importunities, when some more private course might have been taken for their satisfaction.”

Lay Catholics of England printed at Doway “ A Petition Apologetical,” to James I. Their language is remarkable: they complained they were excluded “ that supreme court of Parliament first founded by and for Catholike Men, was furnished with Catholike Prelats, Peeres, and personages; and so continued till the times of *Edward VI. a childe*, and *Queen Elizabeth a Woman.*” *Dodd's Church History.*

The narrative of this once celebrated conference, notwithstanding the absurdity of the topics, becomes in the hands of the entertaining Fuller, a picturesque and dramatic composition, where the dialogue and the manners of the speakers are after the life.

In the course of this conference we obtain a familiar intercourse with the King ; we may admire the capacity of the monarch whose genius was versatile with the subjects ; sliding from theme to theme with the ease which only mature studies could obtain ; entering into the graver parts of these discussions ; discovering a ready knowledge of biblical learning, yet it would sometimes throw itself out with his natural humour, in

apt and familiar illustrations, indulging his own personal feelings with an unparalleled *naïveté*.

The King opened the conference with dignity; “ he said, he was happier than his predecessors, who had to alter what they found established, but he only to confirm what was well settled.” One of the party discovered that the surplice was a kind of garment used by the priests of Isis. The King observed that he had no notion of this antiquity, since his party always call it “ a rag of popery.” “ Dr. Reynolds,” said the King with an air of pleasantry, “ they used to wear hose and shoes in times of popery, have you therefore a mind to go barefoot ?” Reynolds

objected to the words used in matrimony, “with my body I thee worship.” The King said the phrase was an usual English term, as a *gentleman of worship*, &c. and turning to the doctor, smiling, said, “Many a man speaks of Robin Hood, who never shot in his bow ; if you had a good wife yourself, you would think all the honour and worship you could do to her were well bestowed.” Reynolds was not satisfied on the 37th Article declaring that “The Bishop of Rome hath no authority in this land.” And desired it should be added, “nor ought to have any.” In Barlow’s narrative we find that on this his Majesty heartily laughed—a laugh easily caught up by the Lords ; but the

King nevertheless condescended to reply sensibly to the weak objection,

“ What speak you of the Pope’s authority here? *Habemus jure quod habemus* ; and therefore inasmuch as it is said he hath not, it is plain enough that he ought not to have.” It was on this occasion that some “ pleasant discourse passed,” in which “ a Puritan” was defined to be “ a Protestant frightened out of his wits.” The King is more particularly vivacious when he alludes to the occurrences of his own reign, or suspects the Puritans of republican notions. On one occasion, to cut the gordian-knot, the King royally decided—“ I will not argue that point with you, but answer as kings in parliament, *Le Roy s’avisera.*”

When they hinted at a Scottish Presbytery, the King was somewhat stirred, yet what is admirable in him (says Barlow) without a shew of passion. The King had lived among the republican saints, and had been, as he said, “ A King without state, without honour, without order, where beardless boys would brave us to our face ;” and, like the Saviour of the world, “ though he lived among them, he was not of them.” On this occasion although the King may not have “ shewn his passion ;” he broke out, however, with a *naïve* effusion, remarkable for painting after the home-life a republican government. It must have struck Hume forcibly, for he has preserved part of it in the body of his history.

Hume only consulted Fuller. I give the copious explosion from Barlow.

“ If you aim at a Scottish Presbytery, it agreeth as well with Monarchy as God and the Devil. Then Jack, and Tom, and Will, and Dick shall meet, and at their pleasure censure me and my council, and all our proceedings; then Will shall stand up and say, It must be thus; then Dick shall reply, Nay, marry, but we will have it thus. And therefore here I must once more reiterate my former speech, *Le Roy s’avisera*. Stay, I pray you, for one seven years before you demand that of me, and if then you find me pursy and fat, I may hearken to you; for let that government once be up, I am sure I shall be kept in breath; then shall we all of us have work enough: but, Dr. Reynolds, till you find that I grow lazy, let that alone.”

The King added,

“ I will tell you a tale; Knox flattered the queen regent of Scotland, that she was supreme head of all the church, if she suppressed the

popish prelates. But how long, trow ye, did this continue? Even so long, till, by her authority, the popish bishops were repressed, and he himself, and his adherents, were brought in, and well settled. Then lo! they began to make small account of her authority, and took the cause into their own hands."

This was a pointed political tale, appropriately told in the person of a monarch.

The King was never deficient in the force and quickness of his arguments. Even Neale, the great historian of the Puritans, complaining that Dean Barlow has cut off some of the King's speeches, is reluctantly compelled to tax himself with a high commendation of the monarch, who, he acknowledges, on one of the days of this conference,

spoke against the corruptions of the church, and the practices of the prelates, in so much that Dr. Andrews, then dean of the chapel, said, that his Majesty did that day wonderfully play the Puritan.* The King, indeed, was

* The Bishops of James I. were, as Fuller calls one of them, "potent courtiers," and too worldly-minded men. Bancroft was a man of vehement zeal, but of the most grasping avarice, as appears by an epigrammatic epitaph on his death in Arthur Wilson :

Here lies his grace, in cold earth clad,
Who died with want of what he had.

We find a characteristic trait of this Bishop of London in this conference. When Ellesmere, Lord Chancellor, observed, that "livings rather want learned men, than learned men livings; many in the Universities pining for want of places. I wish therefore some may have *single coats* (one living) before others have *doublets*,

seriously inclined to an union of parties. More than once he silenced the angry tongue of Bancroft, and tempered the

(pluralities) and this method I have observed in bestowing the King's benefices." Bancroft replied, " I commend your memorable *care* that way ; but a *doublet* is necessary in cold weather." Thus an avaricious Bishop could turn off with a miserable jest, the open avowal of his love of pluralities. Another, Neile, Bishop of Lincoln, when any one preached who was remarkable for his piety, desirous of withdrawing the King's attention from truths he did not wish to have his Majesty reminded of, would in the sermon time entertain the King with a merry tale, which the King would laugh at, and tell those near him, that he could not hear the preacher for the old—— Bishop ; prefixing an epithet explicit of the character of these merry tales. Kennet has preserved for us this "rank relation," as he calls it ; not, he adds, but " we have had divers hammerings and conflicts within us to leave it out."

Kennet's History of England, II. 729.

zeal of others ; and even commended when he could Dr. Reynolds, the chief of the Puritans ; the King consented to the only two important articles that side suggested, a new Catechism adapted to the people—" Let the weak be informed and the wilful be punished," said the King ; And that new translation of the Bible which forms our present version. " But," added the King, " it must be without marginal notes, for the Geneva Bible is the worst for them, full of seditious conceits ; Asa is censured for *only deposing* his mother for idolatry, and not *killing* her." Thus early the dark spirit of Machiavel had lighted on that of the ruthless Calvin. The grievances of our

first Dissenters were futile — their innovations interminable; and we discover the King's notions, at the close of a proclamation issued after this conference. “ Such is the desultory levity of some people, that they are always languishing after change and novelty, insomuch that were they humoured in their inconstancy, they would expose the public management, and make the administration ridiculous.” Such is the vigorous style of James the First in his proclamations; and such is the political truth, which will not die away with the conference at Hampton Court.

These studies of polemical divinity, like those of the ancient scholastics, were not to be obtained without a

robust intellectual exercise. James instructed his son Charles,* who ex-

* That the clergy were somewhat jealous of their sovereign's interference in these matters, may be traced. When James charged the chaplains, who were to wait on the prince in Spain, to decline, as far as possible, religious disputes, he added, that "should any happen, my son is able to moderate in them." The King, observing one of the divines smile, grew warm, vehemently affirming, "I tell ye, Charles shall manage a point in controversy with the best studied divine of ye all." What the King said, was afterwards confirmed on an extraordinary occasion, in the conference Charles I. held with Alexander Henderson, the old champion of the kirk. Deprived of books, which might furnish the sword and pistol of controversy, and without a chaplain to stand by him as a second, Charles I. fought the theological duel; and the old man, cast down, retired with such a sense of the learning and honour of the King, in maintaining the order of episcopacy in England, that Henderson's death, which soon followed, is attributed to the deep

celled in them ; and to those studies Whitelocke attributes that aptitude of Charles I. which made him so skilful a summer up of arguments, and en-

vexation of this discomfiture. But the veteran, who had succeeded in subverting the hierarchy in Scotland, would not be apt to die of a fit of conversion ; though vexation might be apoplectic in an old and sturdy disputant. The King's controversy was published ; and nearly all the writers agree he carried the day. Yet some divines appear more jealous than grateful : Bishop Kenet touched by the *esprit du corps*, honestly tells us, that “ some thought the King had been better able to *protect* the church, if he had not *disputed* for it.” This discovers all the ardour possible for the *establishment*, and we are to infer that an English sovereign is only to *fight* for his churchmen. But there is a nobler office for a sovereign to perform in ecclesiastical history—to promote the learned and the excellent, and repress the dissolute and the intolerant.

dowed him with so clear a perception in giving his decisions.

We now come to some of the King's writings. James I. has composed treatises on devils and witches; those dramatic personages in courts of law, till only in the last reign they were for ever banished from those courts by act of parliament; and James and his council had no idea that they could get rid of them so quietly. "A Commentary on the Revelations," which was a favourite speculation then, and on which greater geniuses have written since his day. "A Counterblast to Tobacco!" the title more ludicrous than the design.* His Majesty terrified "the

* Not long before James composed his treatise

tobacconists," as the patriarchs of smoking clubs were called, and who

on "Dæmonologie," the learned Wierus had published an elaborate work on the subject. "*De præstigiis Dæmonum et incantationibus et Vaneficiis*," &c. 1568. He advanced one step in philosophy by discovering that many of the supposed cases of incantation originated in the imagination of these sorcerers—but he advanced no farther, for he acknowledges the real diabolical presence. The physician, who pretended to cure the disease, was himself irrecoverably infected. Yet even this single step of Wierus was strenuously resisted by the learned Bodin, who, in his amusing volume of "Démonomanie des Sorciers," 1593, refutes Wierus. These are the leading authors of the times; who were followed by a crowd. Thus James I. neither wanted authorities to quote nor great minds to sanction his "Dæmonologie," first published in 1597. To the honour of England, a single individual, Reginald Scot, with a genius far advanced beyond his age, denied the very existence of those witches and dæmons in the

were selling their very lands and houses, in an epidemical madness, for “a stinking weed,” by discovering that

curious volume of his “Discovery of Witchcraft,” 1584. His books were burnt! and the author was himself not quite out of danger; and Voetius, says Bayle, complains that when the work was translated into Dutch, it raised up a number of libertines who laughed at all the operations and the apparitions of devils. Casaubon and Glanvil, who wrote so much later, treat Scot with profound contempt, assuring us his reasonings are childish, and his philosophy absurd! Such was the reward of a man of genius combating with popular prejudices! Even so late as 1678, these popular superstitions were confirmed by the narrations and the philosophy of Glanvil, Dr. More, &c. The subject enters into the Commentaries on the Laws of England. An edict of Louis XIV. and a statute by George II. made an end of the whole *Diablerie*. Had James I. adopted the system of Reginald Scot, the King had probably been branded as an atheist king!

“ they were making a sooty kitchen in their inward parts.”* And the King gained a point with the great majority of his subjects when he demonstrated

* Harris, with systematic ingenuity against James I. after abusing this tract, as a wretched performance, though himself probably had written a meaner one—quotes the curious information the King gives of the enormous abuse to which the practice of smoking was carried, expressing his astonishment at it. Yet, that James may not escape bitter censure, he abuses the King for levying a heavy tax on it to prevent this ruinous consumption, and his silly policy in discouraging such a branch of our revenues, and an article so valuable to our plantations, &c. As if James I. could possibly incur censure for the discoveries of two centuries after, of the nature of this plant. James saw great families ruined by the epidemic madness, and sacrificed the revenues which his crown might derive from it, to assist its suppression. This was patriotism in the monarch.

to their satisfaction, that the pope was antichrist. Ridiculous as these topics are to us, the works themselves were formed on what modern philosophers affect to term, the principle of utility ; a principle which, with them indeed, includes every thing they approve of, and nothing they dislike.

It was a prompt honesty of intention to benefit his people, which seems to have been the urgent motive that induced this monarch to become an author, more than any literary ambition ; for he writes on no prepared or permanent topic, and even published anonymously, and as he once wrote, “ post-haste,” what he composed or designed for practical and immediate

use ; and even in that admirable treatise on the duties of a sovereign, which he addressed to Prince Henry, a great portion is directed to the exigencies of the times, the parties, and the circumstances, of his own court. Of the works now more particularly noticed, their interest has ceased with the melancholy follies which at length have passed away ; although the philosophical inquirer will not choose to drop this chapter in the history of mankind. But one fact in favour of our royal author is testified by the honest Fuller and the cynical Osborne. On the King's arrival in England, having discovered the numerous impostures and illusions which he had often referred to as authorities, he

grew suspicious of the whole system of “*Dæmonologie*,” and at length recanted it entirely. With the same conscientious zeal James had written the book, the King condemned it; and the Sovereign separated himself from the Author, in the cause of truth.

But this apology for having written these treatises need not rest on this fact, however honourably it appeals to our candour. Let us place it on higher ground, and tell those who asperse this monarch for his credulity and intellectual weakness, that they, themselves, had they lived in the reign of James I. had probably written on the same topics; and felt as uneasy at the rumour of a witch being a resident in their neighbourhood!

This and the succeeding age were the times of omens and meteors, prognostics and providences—of “day-fatality,” or, the superstition of fortunate and unfortunate days, and the combined powers of astrology and magic. It was only at the close of the century of James I. that Bayle wrote a treatise on comets, to prove that they had no influence in the cabinets of princes: this was, however, done with all the precaution imaginable. The greatest minds were then sinking under such popular superstitions; and whoever has read much of the private history of this age will have smiled at their ludicrous terrors and bewildered reasonings. The most ordinary events were attributed to an interposition of providence.

In the unpublished memoirs of that learned antiquary, Sir Symond D'Ewes, such frequently occur. When a comet appeared, and D'Ewes, for exercise at college, had been ringing the great bell, and entangled himself in the rope, which had nearly strangled him, he resolves not to ring while the comet is in the heavens. When a fire happened at the Six Clerks' Office, of whom his father was one, he inquires into the most prominent sins of the six clerks: these were the love of the world, and doing business on Sundays; and it seems they thought so themselves; for after the fire, the office-door was fast closed on the Sabbath. When the Thames had an unusual ebb and flow,

it was observed, that it had never happened in their recollection, but just before the rising of the Earl of Essex in Elizabeth's reign,—and Sir Symond became uneasy at the political aspect of affairs.

All the historians of these times are very particular in marking the bearded beams of blazing stars ; and the first public event that occurs is always connected with its radiant course. Arthur Wilson describes one which preceded the death of the simple queen of James I. It was generally imagined, that “ this great light in the heaven was sent as a flambeaux to her funeral ;” but the historian discovers, while “ this blaze was burning, the fire of war broke

out in Bohemia." It was found difficult to decide between the two opinions ; since Rushworth, who wrote long afterwards, carefully chronicles both.

The truth is, the greatest geniuses of the age of James I. were as deeply concerned in these investigations as his Majesty. Had the great Verulam emancipated himself from all the dreams of his age? He speaks indeed cautiously of witchcraft, but does not deny its occult agency ; and of astrology he is rather for the improvement than the rejection. The bold spirit of Rawleigh contended with the superstitions of the times ; but how feeble is the contest where we fear to strike ! Even Rawleigh is prodigal of his praise to James

for the King's chapter on magic. The great mind of Rawleigh perceived how much men are formed and changed by *education*; but, were this principle admitted to its extent, the *stars* would lose their influence! In pleading for the free agency of man, he would escape from the pernicious tendency of predestination, or the astral influence, which yet he allows. To extricate himself from the dilemma, he invents an analogical reasoning of a royal power of dispensing with the laws in extreme cases: so that, though he does not deny "the binding of the stars," he declares they are controllable by the will of the Creator. In this manner, fettered by prevalent opinions, he satis-

fies the superstitions of an astrological age, and the penetration of his own genius. At a much later period Dr. Henry More, a writer of great genius, confirmed the ghost and demon creed, by a number of facts, as marvellously pleasant as any his own poetical fancy could have invented. Other great authors have not less distinguished themselves. When has there appeared a single genius, who at once could free himself of the prejudices of his contemporaries ; nay, of his own party ? Genius, in its advancement beyond the intelligence of its own age, is but progressive ; it is fancifully said to soar, but it only climbs. Yet the minds of some authors of this age are often dis-

covered to be superior to their work ; because the mind is impelled by its own inherent powers, but the work usually originates in the age. James I. once acutely observed, how “ the author may be wise, but the work foolish.”

Thus minds of a higher rank than our royal author, had not yet cleared themselves out of these clouds of popular prejudices. We now proceed to more decisive results of the superior capacity of this much ill-used monarch.

The habits of life of this monarch were those of a man of letters. His first studies were soothed by none of their enticements. If James loved literature it was for itself ; for Buchanan

did not tinge the rim of the vase with honey; and the bitterness was tasted not only in the draught, but also in the rod. In some princes, the harsh discipline James passed through has raised a strong aversion against literature. The Dauphin, for whose use was formed the well-known edition of the Classics, looked on the volumes with no eye of love. To free himself of his tutor, Huet, he eagerly consented to an early marriage. “ Now we shall see if Mr. Huet shall any more keep me to ancient geography!” exclaimed the Dauphin, rejoicing in the first act of despotism. This ingenuous sally, it is said, too deeply affected that learned man for many years afterwards. Huet’s zealous gentleness (for how could

Huet be too rigid?) wanted the art which Buchanan disdained to practise. But, in the case of the Prince of Scotland, a constitutional timidity combining with an ardour for study, and, therefore, a veneration for his tutor, produced a more remarkable effect. Such was the terror which the remembrance of this illustrious but inexorable republican left on the imagination of his royal pupil, that even so late as when James was seated on the English throne, once the appearance of his frowning tutor in a dream greatly agitated the King, who in vain attempted to pacify him in this portentous vision. This extraordinary fact may be found in a manuscript letter of that day.*

* The learned Mede wrote the present letter

James, even by the confession of his bitter satirist, Francis Osborne, “ dedi-

soon after another, which had not been acknowledged, to his friend Sir M. Stuteville; and the writer is uneasy lest the political secrets of the day might bring the parties into trouble. It seems he was desirous that letter should be read, and then burnt.

“ *March 31, 1622.*

“ I hope my letter miscarried not; if it did, I am in a sweet pickle. I desired to hear from you of the receipt and extinction of it. Though there is no danger in my letters whilst report is so rife, yet when it is forgotten they will not be so safe; but your danger is as great as mine——

“ Mr. Downham was with me, now come from London. He told me that it was three years ago since those verses were delivered to the King in a dream, by his Master Buchanan, who seemed to *check him severely, as he used to do*; and his Majesty, in his dream, seemed desirous to pacify him, but he, *turning away with a frowning countenance*, would utter those verses, which his

cated rainy weather to his standish, and fair to his hounds." His life had the uniformity of a student's ; but the regulated life of a learned monarch must have weighed down the gay and dissipated with the deadliest monotony. Hence one of these courtiers declared, that, if he were to awake after a sleep of seven years continuance, he would

Majesty, perfectly remembering, repeated the next day, and many took notice of them. Now, by occasion of the late soreness in his arm, and the doubtfulness what it would prove ; especially having, by mischance, fallen into the fire with that arm, the remembrance of the verses began to trouble him."

It appears that these verses were of a threatening nature, since, in a melancholy fit, they were recalled to recollection after an interval of three years ; the verses are lost to us, with the letter which contained them.

undertake to enumerate the whole of his Majesty's occupations, and every dish that had been placed on the table during the interval. But this courtier was not aware that the monotony which the King occasioned him was not so much in the King himself, as in his own volatile spirit.

The table of James I. was a trial of wits, says a more learned courtier, who often partook of these prolonged conversations ; those genial and convivial conferences were the recreations of the King, and the means often of advancing those whose talents had then an opportunity of discovering themselves. A life, so constant in its pursuits, was to have been expected from the temper of

him, who, at the view of the Bodleian Library, exclaimed, “ Were I not a king, I would be an university man ; and, if it were so that I must be a prisoner, I would have no other prison than this library, and be *chained together* with all these goodly authors.”*

Study, indeed, became one of the businesses of life with our contemplative monarch ; and so zealous was James to form his future successor, that he even seriously engaged in the education of both his sons. James I. offers

* In this well-known exclamation of James I. a witty allusion has been probably overlooked. The King had in his mind the then prevalent custom of securing books by fastening them to the shelves by *chains*, long enough to reach to the reading desks under them.

the singular spectacle of a father, who was at once a preceptor and a monarch: it was in this spirit the King composed for Prince Henry his “Basilicon Doron;” or, “The Golden Image,”—a work of which something more than the intention is great, and he directed the studies of the unfortunate Charles. That both these princes were no common pupils may be fairly attributed to the King himself. Never did the character of a young prince shoot out with nobler promises than Henry:—an enthusiast for literature and arms—that prince already shewed a great and commanding spirit. Charles was a man of fine taste: he had talents and virtues, errors and misfortunes; but he

was not without a spirit equal to the days of his trial.

The mind of James I. had at all times the fulness of a student's, delighting in the facility and copiousness of composition. The King wrote, in one week, one hundred folio pages of a monitory address to the European sovereigns ; and, in as short a time, his apology, sent to the pope and cardinals. These he delivered to the bishops merely as notes for their use ; but they were declared to form of themselves a complete answer. “ *Qua felicitate* they were done, let others judge ; but, *Qua celeritate*—I can tell,” says the courtly bishop who collected the King's works, and who is here quoted, not for the

compliment he would infer, but for the fact he states. The week's labour of his Majesty provoked from Cardinal Perron about one thousand pages in folio, and replies and rejoinders from the learned in Europe.*

* Mr. Lodge, in his "Illustrations of British History," praises and abuses James I. for the very same treatises. Mr. Lodge, dropping the sober character of the antiquary, for the smarter one of the critic, tells us, "James had the good fortune to gain the two points he principally aimed at in the publication of these *dull treatises*—the reputation of an acute disputant, and the honour of having Cardinal Bellarmin for an antagonist."—Did Mr. Lodge ever read these "dull treatises?" I declare I never have; but, I believe, these treatises are not dull, from the inference he draws from them: for how any writer can gain the reputation of "an acute disputant," by writing "dull treatises," Mr. Lodge only can explain. It is in this manner, and by unphilosophical

The eloquence of James is another feature in the literary character of this monarch. Amidst the sycophancy of the court of a learned sovereign, some truths will manifest themselves. Bishop Williams, in his funeral eulogy of James I. has praised with warmth the eloquence of the departed monarch, whom he intimately knew; and this was an acquisition of James's, so manifest to all, that the bishop made eloquence essential to the dignity of a monarch; observing, that "it was the want of it that made Moses, in a manner refuse all government, though offered by

critics, that the literary reputation of James has been flourished down by modern pens. It was sure game to attack James I.!

God.”* He would not have hazarded so peculiar an eulogium had not the

* This funeral sermon, by laying such a stress on the *eloquence* of James I. it is said, occasioned the disgrace of the zealous bishop; perhaps also by the arts of the new courtiers practising on the feelings of the young monarch. It appears that Charles betrayed frequent symptoms of impatience.

This allusion to the *stammering* of Moses, was most unlucky; for Charles had this defect in his delivery, which he laboured all his life to correct. In the first speech from the throne, he alludes to it: “ Now, because *I am unfit for much speaking*, I mean to bring up the fashion of my predecessors, to have my lord-keeper speak for me in most things.” And he closed a speech to the Scottish parliament, by saying, that “ he does not offer to endear himself by words, *which indeed is not my way*.” This, however, proved to be one of those little circumstances which produce a more important result than is suspected. By this substitution of a lord-keeper, instead of the

monarch been distinguished by that talent.

Hume first observed of James I. that “ the speaker of the House of Commons is usually an eminent man ; yet the harangue of his Majesty will always be found much superior to that of the speaker in every parliament during this reign.” His numerous proclamations are evidently wrought by his own hand, and display the pristine vigour of the state of our age of genius. That the state papers were usually composed by

sovereign, he failed in exciting the personal affections of his parliament. Even the most gracious speech, from the lips of a lord-keeper, is but formally delivered and coldly received ; and Charles had not yet learned that there are no deputies for our feelings.

himself, a passage in the life of the lord-keeper Williams, testifies ; and, when Sir Edward Conway, who had been bred a soldier, and was even illiterate, became a viscount and a secretary of state by the appointment of Buckingham,—the King, who in fact wanted no secretary, would often be merry over his imperfect scrawls in writing, and his hacking of sentences in reading, often breaking out in laughter, exclaiming, “ Stenny has provided me with a secretary, who can neither write nor read ; and a groom of my bed-chamber, who cannot truss my points,”—this latter person having but one hand ! It is evident, since Lord Conway, the most inefficient secretary ever

king had, and I have myself seen his scrawls, remained many years in office, that James I. required no secretary, and transacted his affairs with his own mind and hand. These habits of business and of study prove that James indulged much less those of indolence for which he is so gratuitously accused.

Amidst all the ridicule and contempt in which the intellectual capacity of James I. is involved, this college-pedant, who is imagined to have given into every species of false wit, and never to have reached beyond quibbles, puns, conceits, and quolibets,—was in truth a great wit; quick in retort, and happy in illustration; and often delivering

opinions with a sententious force. One of the malicious writers of his secret history, Sir Anthony Weldon, not only informs us that he was witty, but describes the manner. “ He was very witty, and had as many witty jests as any man living; at which he would not smile himself, but deliver them in a grave and serious manner.” Thus the King was not only witty, but a dexterous wit: nor is he one of those who are recorded as having only said one good thing in their lives; for his vein was not apt to dry.

His conversations, like those of most literary men, he loved to prolong at table. We find them described by one who had partaken of them.

“The reading of some books before him was very frequent, while he was at his repast ; and otherwise he collected knowledge by variety of questions, which he carved out to the capacity of different persons. Methought his hunting humour was not off, while the learned stood about him at his board ; he was ever in chace after some disputable doubts, which he would wind and turn about with the most stabbing objections that ever I heard ; and was as pleasant and fellow-like, in all these discourses, as with his huntsman in the field. Those who were ripe and weighty in their answers, were ever designed for some place of credit or profit.”*

The relics of his witticisms and observations on human life, on state affairs, in literature and history, are scattered among contemporary writers, and some are even traditional ; I regret

* Hacket's curious *Life of the Lord-Keeper, Williams*, p. 38, Part 11.

that I have not preserved many which occurred in the course of reading. It has happened, however, that a man of genius has preserved for posterity some memorials of the wit, the learning, and the sense of the monarch.*

In giving some loose specimens of the wit and capacity of a man, if they are too few, it may be imagined that

* In the Harl. MSS. 7582, Art. 3. one entitled "Crumms fallen from King James's Table; or his Table-Talk, taken by Sir Thomas Overbury. The original being in his own handwriting." This MS. has been, perhaps, imperfectly printed in "The Prince's Cabala, or Mysteries of State," 1715. This Collection of Sir Thomas Overbury was shortened by his unhappy fate, since he perished early in the reign.—Another Harl. MS, contains things "as they were at sundrie times spoken by James I." I have drawn others from

they are so from their rarity ; and if too many, the page swells into a mere collection. But truth is not over nice to obtain her purpose, and even the common labours she inspires are associated with her pleasures.

Early in life James I. had displayed the talent of apt allusion, and his classical wit on the Spaniards, that “ He expected no other favour from them than the courtesy of Polyphemus to Ulysses—to be the last devoured,” delighted Elizabeth, and has even entered

the Harl. MSS. 6395.—We have also printed “ Wittie Observations, gathered in King James’s ordinary Discourse,” 1643 ; and, “ Witty Apothegms, delivered at several times by King James, King Charles, the Marquis of Worcester,” &c. 1658.

into our history. Arthur Wilson, at the close of his *Life of James I.* has preserved one of his apothegms, while he censures him for not making timely use of it. “ Let that prince, who would beware of conspiracies, be rather jealous of such whom his extraordinary favours have advanced, than of those whom his displeasure hath discontented. *These* want means to execute their pleasures, but *those* have means at pleasure to execute their desires.” Wilson himself ably developes this important state-observation, by adding, that “ Ambition to rule is more vehement than malice to revenge.” A pointed reflection, which rivals a maxim of Rochefoucault.

The King observed, that “ Very wise men and very fools do little harm ; it is the mediocrity of wisdom that troubleth all the world.”—He described, by a lively image, the differences which rise in argument : “ Men, in arguing, are often carried by the force of words farther asunder than their question was at first ; like two ships going out of the same haven, their landing is many times whole countries distant.”—One of the great national grievances, as it appeared both to the government and the people, in James’s reign, was the perpetual growth of the metropolis, and the nation, like an hypochondriac, was ludicrously terrified that their head was too monstrous for

their body, and drew all the moisture of life from the remoter parts. It is amusing to observe the endless and vain precautions employed to stop all new buildings, and to force persons out of town to reside at their country mansions. Proclamations warned and exhorted, but the very interference of prohibition rendered the crowded town more delightful. One of its attendant calamities was the prevalent one of that day, the plague; and one of those state libels, which were early suppressed, or never printed, entitled “ Balaam’s Ass,” has this passage: “ In this deluge of new buildings, we shall be all poisoned with breathing in one another’s faces; and your Majesty hath most

truly said, “ England will shortly be London, and London, England.” It was the popular wish, that country gentlemen should reside more on their estates, and it was on this occasion the King made that admirable allusion, which has been recently repeated in the House of Commons: “ Gentlemen resident on their estates were like ships in port—their value and magnitude were felt and acknowledged; but, when at a distance, as their size seemed insignificant, so their worth and importance were not duly estimated.” The King abounded with similar observations; for he drew from life more than even from books.

James is reproached for being defi-

cient in political sagacity ; notwithstanding, that, he somewhat prided himself on what he denominated “ king’s-craft.” This is the fate of a pacific and domestic prince !

“ A king,” said James, “ ought to be a preserver of his people, as well of their fortunes as lives, and not a destroyer of his subjects. Were I to make such a war as the King of France doth, with such tyranny on his own subjects—with Protestants on one side, and his soldiers drawn to slaughter on the other,—I would put myself in a monastery all my days after, and repent me that I had brought my subjects to such misery.”

That James was an adept in his “ king’s-craft,” by which term he meant the science of politics, even the confession of such a writer as Sir Anthony Weldon testifies ; who acknowledges,

that “ no prince living knew how to make use of men better than King James.” He certainly foresaw the spirit of the Commons, and predicted to the Prince and Buckingham, events which occurred after his death. When Cranfield, Earl of Middlesex, whom James considered an useful servant, Buckingham sacrificed, as it would appear, to the clamours of a party, James said, “ You are making a rod for your own back ;” and when Prince Charles was encouraging the frequent petitions of the Commons, James told him, “ You will live to have your bellyful of petitions.” The following anecdote may serve to prove his political sagacity.—When the Emperor of

Germany, instigated by the Pope and his own state-interests, projected a crusade against the Turks, he solicited from James the aid of three thousand Englishmen; the wise and pacific monarch, in return, advised the Emperor's ambassador to apply to France and Spain, as being more nearly concerned in this project: but the ambassador very ingeniously argued, that James being a more remote prince, would more effectually alarm the Turks, from a notion of a general armament of the Christian princes against them. James got rid of the importunate ambassador by observing, that "three thousand Englishmen would do no more hurt to the Turks, than

fleas to their skins: great attempts may do good by a destruction, but little ones only stir up anger to hurt themselves."

His vein of familiar humour flowed at all times, and his facetiousness was sometimes indulged at the cost of his royalty. In those unhappy differences between him and his parliament, one day mounting his horse, which, though usually sober and quiet, began to bound and prance.—“ Sirrah !” exclaimed the King, who seemed to fancy that his favourite prerogative was somewhat resisted on this occasion, “ if you be not quiet, I’ll send you to the five hundred kings in the lower house: they’ll quickly tame you.”—When one of the

Lumleys was pushing on his lineal ascent beyond the patience of the hearers, the King, to cut short the tedious descendant of the Lumleys, cried out, “ Stop, mon ! thou needst no more : now I learn that Adam’s surname was Lumley ! ” When Colonel Gray, a military adventurer of that day, just returned from Germany, seemed vain of his accoutrements, on which he had spent his all,—the King, staring at this buckled, belted, sworded and pistoled, but ruined Martinet, observed, that “ this town was so well fortified, that, were it victualled, it might be impregnable.”

Possessing the talent of eloquence, the quickness of wit, and the diversified

knowledge which produced his “Table-Talk,” we find also many evidences of his sagacity in the discovery of truth, with that honourable zeal in a monarch which busied him in all the trouble of finding it out. The King, on historical evidence, and by what he said in his own works, claims the honour of discovering the gunpowder-plot, by the sagacity and reflection with which he solved the enigmatical and ungrammatical letter sent on that occasion. The train of his thoughts has even been preserved to us ; and, although a loose passage, in a private letter of the Earl of Salisbury, contradicted by another passage in the same letter, would indicate that the Earl was the man ; yet

even Mrs. Macaulay acknowledges the propriety of attributing the discovery to the king's sagacity. Several proofs of his zeal and reflection in the detection of imposture might be adduced ; and the reader may, perhaps, be amused by these.

There existed a conspiracy against the Countess of Exeter by Lady Lake, and her daughter, Lady Ross. They had contrived to forge a letter in the Countess's name, in which she confessed all the heavy crimes they accused her of, which were incest, witchcraft, &c. ;* and, to confirm its authenticity, as the King was curious respecting the place,

* Camden's Annals of James I. Kennet II. 652.

the time, and the occasion, when the letter was written, their maid swore it was at the Countess's house at Wimbledon, and that she had written it at the window, near the upper end of the great chamber; and that she (the maid) was hid beneath the tapestry, where she heard the Countess read over the letter after writing. The King appeared satisfied with this new testimony; but, unexpectedly, he visited the great chamber at Wimbledon, observed the distance of the window, placed himself behind the hangings, and made the lords in their turn: not one could distinctly hear the voice of a person placed at the window. The King further observed, that the tapestry

was two feet short of the ground, and that any one standing behind it must inevitably be discovered. “ Oaths cannot confound my sight,” exclaimed the King. Having also effectuated other discoveries with a confession of one of the parties, and Sir Thomas Lake being a faithful servant of James as he had been of Elizabeth, the King, who valued him, desired he would not stand the trial with his wife and daughter: but the old man pleaded that he was a husband, and a father, and must fall with them. “ It is a fall!” said the King: “ your wife is the serpent; your daughter is Eve; and you, poor man, are Adam!”*

* The suit cost Sir Thomas Lake L 30,000;

There was a singular impostor in his reign, of whom no one denies the King the merit of detecting the deception—so far was James I. from being credulous, as he is generally supposed to have been. Ridiculous as the affair may appear to us, it had perfectly succeeded with the learned fellows of New College, Oxford, and afterwards with heads as deep ; and it required some exertion of the King's philosophical reasoning to pronounce on the deception.

the fines in the star-chamber were always heavy in all reigns. Harris refers to this cause as an evidence of the tyrannic conduct of James I. as if the King was always influenced by personal dislike ; but he does not give the story.

One Haddock, who was desirous of becoming a preacher, but had a stuttering and slowness of utterance, which he could not get rid of, took to the study of physic ; but recollecting, that, when at Winchester, his schoolfellows had told him, that he spoke fluently in his sleep, he tried, after his first sleep, to form a discourse on physic. Finding that he succeeded, he continued the practice : he then tried divinity, and spoke a good sermon. Having prepared one for the purpose, he sat up in his bed, and delivered it so loudly, that it attracted attention in the next chamber. It was soon reported that Haddock preached in his sleep ; and nothing was heard but inquiries after the *sleep-*

ing preacher, who soon found it his interest to keep up the delusion. He was now considered as a man truly inspired ; and he did not in his own mind rate his talent at less worth than the first vacant bishopric. He was brought to court, where the greatest personages anxiously sat up through the night by his bedside. They tried all the maliciousness of Puck, to pinch, and to stir him : he was without hearing or feeling ; but they never departed without an orderly text and sermon ; at the close of which, groaning and stretching himself, he pretended to awake, declaring he was unconscious of what had passed. “The King,” says Wilson, no flatterer of

James, “ privately handled him so like a chirurgeon, that he found out the sore.” The King was present at one of these sermons, and forbid them; and his reasonings, on this occasion, brought the sleeping preacher on his knees. The King observed, that things studied in the daytime may be dreamed of in the night, but always irregularly, without order; not, as these sermons were, good and learned: as particularly the one preached before his Majesty in his sleep,—which he first treated physically, then theologically; “ and I observed,” said the King, “ that he always preaches best when he has the most crowded audience.” This sleeping preacher’s practice

proceeded from his natural infirmity of stammering: he found he could speak better in bed, with his eyes shut from every object, and his habit of talking in his sleep. This induced him to practise the deception: but, “ were he allowed to proceed, all slander and treason might pass under colour of being asleep,” added the King, who notwithstanding his pretended inspiration, awoke the sleeping preacher for ever afterwards.

We now come to that treatise of James I. entitled “ Basilicon Doron (the Golden Image); or, His Majesty’s Instruction to his dearest son, Henry, the Prince:” composed by the King in Scotland, in the freshness of his

studious days ; a work, addressed to a prince by a monarch, and which, in some respects, could only have come from the hand of such a workman. The morality and the politics often retain their curiosity and their value. Our royal author has drawn his principles of government from the classical volumes of antiquity ; for then politicians quoted Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero. His waters had, indeed, flowed over those beds of ore ;* but the growth and vigour of the work comes from the mind of the King him-

* James, early in life, was a fine scholar, and a lover of the ancient historians, as appears from an accidental expression of Buchanan's, in his dedication to James of his "Baptistes;" referring to Sallust, he adds, *apud TUUM Salustium*.

self: he writes for the Prince of Scotland, and about the Scottish people. On its first appearance, Camden has recorded the strong sensation it excited: it was not only admired, but it entered into and won the hearts of men. Harris, forced to acknowledge in his mean style and with his frigid temper, that “this book contains some tolerable things,” omits not to hint, that “it might not be his own:” as, with the same spirit, he denies the “Eikon Basilike, the Royal Image,” to be the composition of the unhappy son. In both cases the internal evidence substantiates the claims of their respective authors; but in that of James I. it is more evident from the peculiarity of the style;

the period at which it was composed ; and by those particular passages which are stampt with all the individuality of the King himself. The style is remarkable for its profuse sprinkling of Scottish and French words, where the doric plainness of the one, and the intelligent expression of the other, offers a curious instance of the influence of manners over language ; the diction of the royal author is a striking evidence of the intermixture of the two nations, and of a court which had marked its divided interests by its own checquered language.

This royal manual still interests a philosophical mind ; like one of those antique and curious pictures we sometimes discover in a cabinet,—studied

for the costume ; yet where the touches of nature may be true, although the colouring is brown and sometimes faded ; but there is a force, and sometimes even a charm, in the ancient simplicity, to which even the delicacy of taste may return, not without pleasure. The King tells his son :—

“ Sith all people are naturally inclined to follow their prince’s example, in your own person make your wordes and deedes to fight together ; and let your own life be a law-book, and a mirror to your people, that therein they may read the practice of their own lawes, and see by your image what life they should lead.”

“ But vnto one faulte is all the common people of this kingdome subject, as well burgh as land ; which is, to judge and speak rashly of their prince, setting the commonweale vpon foure props, as wee call it ; euer wearying of the present estate, and desirous of nouelties.” The

remedy the King suggests, “ besides the execution of laws that are to be vsed against vnreuerent speakers,” is so to rule, as that “ the subjects may not only live in suretie and wealth, but be stirred vp to open their mouthes in your iust praise.”

The royal author distinguishes a king from a tyrant, on their first entrance into the government.

“ A tyrant will enter like a saint, till he find himself fast under foot, and then will suffer his unruly affections to burst forth.” He advises the Prince to act contrary to Nero, who, at first, “ with his tender-hearted wish, *vellem nescire literas*,” appeared to lament that he was to execute the laws. He, on the contrary, would have the Prince early shew “ the severitie of justice, which will settle the country, and make them know that ye can strike : this would be but for a time. If otherwise ye kyth (shew) your clemencie at the first the offences would soon come to such heapes, and the contempt of you grow so great, that when

ye would fall to punish, the number to be punished would exceed the innocent; and ye would, against your nature, be compelled then to warcke manie, whom the chastisement of few in the beginning might have preserved. In this my own dear-bought experience may serve you for a different lesson. For I confess, where I thought (by being gracious at the beginning) to gain all men's heart to a loving and willing obedience, I by the contrarie found the disorder of the countrie, and the loss of my thanks, to be all my reward."

James, in the course of the work, often instructs the Prince by his own errors and misfortunes; and certainly one of these was an excess of the kinder impulses in granting favours; there was nothing selfish in his happiness; James seemed to wish that every one around him should participate in the fullness of his own enjoyment. His

hand was always open to scatter about him honours and wealth, and not always on unworthy favourites, but often on learned men whose talents he knew so well to appreciate. There was a warmth in the King's temper which once he himself well described; he did not like those who pride themselves on their tepid dispositions. " I love not one that will never be angry, for as he that is without sorrow is without gladness, so he that is without anger is without love. Give me the heart of a man, and out of that all his actions shall be acceptable." The King thus addresses the Prince :—

" Be not moved with importunities; for the which cause, as also for augmenting your

Maiestie, be not so facile of access-giving at all times, I as have been.”—In his minority, the choice of his servants had been made by others, “ recommending servants unto me, more for serving, in effect, their friends that put them in, than their maister that admitted them, and used them well, at the first rebellion raised against me. Chuse you your own servantes for your own vse, and not for the vse of others; and, since ye must be *communis parens* to all your people, chuse indifferentlie out of all quarters; not respecting other men’s appetites, but their own qualities. For as you must command all, so reason would ye should be served of all.—Be a daily watchman over your own servants, that they obey your laws precisely; for how can your laws be kept in the country, if they be broken at your care!—Bee homelie or strange with them, as ye think their behaviour deserveth and their nature may bear ill.—Employ every man as ye think him qualified, but use not one in all things, lest he wax proud, and be envied by his fellows.—As for the other sort of your companie and servants, they ought to be of perfect age, see they be of a good fame; otherwise what can the people think but that ye

have chosen a companion unto you according to your own humour, and so have preferred those men for the love of their vices and crimes, that ye knew them to be guiltie of. For the people, that see you not within, cannot judge of you but according to the outward appearance of your actions and company, which only is subject to their sight."

James I. has painted, with vivid touches, the Anti-Monarchists, or Revolutionists, of his time.

" He describes " their imagined democracie, where they fed themselves with the hope to become *tribunî plebi*; and so, in a popular government, by leading the people by the nose, to bear the sway of all the rule.—Every faction," he adds, " always joined them. I was oft-times calumniated in their popular sermons, not for any evill or vice in me,* but because I was a king,

* The conduct of James I. in Scotland has even extorted praise from one of his bitterest calumniators; for Mrs. Macaulay has said, " His

which they thought the highest evil; and, because they were ashamed to profess this quarrel, they were busied to look narrowly in all my actions, pretending to distinguish the lawfulness of the office from the vice of the person: yet some of them would snapper out well grossly with the truth of their intentions, informing the people that all kings and princes were naturally enemies to the liberties of the church; whereby the ignorant were emboldened (as bayards),* to cry the learned and modest out of it: but their parity is the mother of confusion, and enemy to unity, which is the mother of order." And it is not without eloquence his Majesty describes these factious Anti-Monarchists, as " Men, whom no deserts can oblige, neither oaths nor promises bind; breathing nothing but sedition and calumnies, aspiring without measure, railing without reason,

conduct, when King of Scotland, was in many points unexceptionable."

* An old French word, expressing, " a man that gapes or gazes earnestly at a thing; a fly-catcher; a greedy and unmannerly beholder."—

Cotgrave.

and making their own imaginations the square of their conscience. I protest, before the great God, and, since I am here as vpon my testament, it is no place for me to lie in, that ye shall never find with any Hie-land, or Border theeves, greater ingratitude, and more lies and vile perjuries: ye may keep them for trying your patience, as Socrates did an evill wife."

The King makes three great divisions of the Scottish people: the church, the nobility, and the burghers.

Of the nobility, the King counsels the Prince to check

"A fectless arrogant conceit of their greatness and power, drinking in with their very nourish-milk. Teach your nobilitie to keep your lawes, as precisely as the meanest; fear not their orping, or being discontented, as long as ye rule well: for their pretended reformation of princes taketh never effect, but where evil government proceedeth.—Acquaint yourself so with all the honest men of your barone and gentlemen, giving access

so open and affable, to make their own suites to you themselves, and not to employ the great lordes, their intercessours : so shall ye bring to a measure their monstrous backes. And for their barbarous feïdes (feuds), put the laws to due execution made by mee there-anent ; beginning ever rathest at him that yee love best, and is oblished vnto you, to make him an example to the rest. Make all your reformatiōs to begin at your elbow, and so by degrees to the extremities of the land.”

He would not, however, that the Prince should highly contemn the nobility : “ Remember, howe that error brake the king, my grandfather’s, heart. Consider that vertue followeth ofttest noble blood : the more frequently that your court can be garnished with them, as peers and fathers of your land, thinke it the more your honour.”

He impresses on the mind of the Prince ever to embrace the quarrel of the poor and the sufferer, and to remember the honourable title given to

his grandfather, in being called “ The poor man’s king.”

James I. had a project of improving the state of those that dwelt in the isles, “ who are so utterly barbarous,” by intermixing some of the semi-civilized Highlanders, and planting colonies among them of inland subjects.

“ I have already made laws against the overlords, and the chief of their clannes, and it would be no difficultie to danton them ; so rooting out, or transporting the barbarous and stubborn sort, and planting civilized in their rooms.”

This was as wise a scheme as any modern philosopher could have suggested, and with the conduct he pursued in Ireland may be referred to as splendid proofs of the kingly duties so zealously performed by this monarch.

Of merchants, as this king understood the commercial character, he had no honourable notion.

He says, “ They think the whole commonwealth ordained for raising them up, and accounting it their lawful gain to enrich themselves upon the losses of the rest of the people.”

We are not to censure James I. for his principles of political economy, which then had not assumed the dignity of a science ; his rude and simple ideas convey popular truths.

The last portion of the Basilicon Doron is devoted to domestic regulations for the Prince, respecting his manners and habits ; which the King calls “ the indifferent actions of a man.”

“ A king is set as one on a stage, whose smallest actions and gestures all the people gazinglie do

behold; and, however just in the discharge of his office, yet, if his behaviour be light or dissolute, in indifferent actions, the people, who see but the outward part, conceive pre-occupied conceits of the king's inward intention, which, although with time, the trier of all truth, will evanish by the evidence of the contrarie effect, yet, *interim patitur justus*, and pre-judged conceits will, in the mean time, breed contempt, the mother of rebellion and disorder. Besides," the King adds, "the indifferent actions and behaviour of a man have a certain holding and dependence upon vertue or vice, according as they are used or ruled."

The Prince is not to keep regular hours,

"That any time in the four and twentie hours may be alike to you; thereby your diet may be accommodated to your affairs, and not your affairs to your diet."

The Prince is to eat in public, "to shew that he loves not to haunt companie, which is one of the marks of a tyrant, and that he delights not to eat privatelie, ashamed of his gluttonie" As

a curious instance of the manners of the times, the King advises the Prince “ to use mostly to eat of reasonable-groffe and common meats ; not only for making your bodie strong for travel, as that ye may be the hartlier received by your meane subjects in their houses, when their cheere may suffice you, which otherwaies would be imputed to you for pride, and breed coldness and disdain in them.”

I have noticed his counsel against the pedantry or other affectations of style in speaking.

He adds, “ Let it be plaine, natural, comelie, cleane, short, and sententious.”

In his gestures “ He is neither to look sillily, like a stupid pedant ; nor unsettledly, with an uncouth morgue, like a new-come-over cavalier ; not over sparing in your courtesies, for that will be imputed to incivilitie and arrogance ; nor yet over prodigal in jowking or nodding at every step, for that forme of being popular becometh better, aspiring Absaloms than lawful kings ;

forming ever your gesture according to your present action ; looking gravely, and with a majestie, when ye sit upon judgment, or give audience to ambassadors ; homely, when ye are in private with your own servants ; merrily, when ye are at any pastime, or merry discourse : and let your countenance smell of courage and magnanimity when at the warres. And remember, (I say again) to be plaine and sensible in your language ; for besides, it is the tongue's office to be the messenger of the mind ; it may be thought a point of imbecilitie of spirit, in a king to speak obscurely, much more untrewely, as if he stood in awe of any in uttering his thoughts."

Should the prince incline to be an author, the King adds—

" If your engine (genius) spur you to write any workes, either in prose or verse, I cannot but allow you to practise it ; but take no longsome works in hande, for distracting you from your calling."

He reminds the Prince with dignity
and truth,

“ Your writes (writings) will remain as the true picture of your minde, to all posterities ; if yee would write worthelie, chuse subjects worthie of you.” His critical conception of the nature of poetry is its best definition. “ If ye write in verse, remember that it is not the principal part of a poem to rime right, and flow well with many prettie wordes ; but the chief commendation of a poem is, that when the verse shall bee taken sundry in prose, it shall be found so ritch in quick inventions and poetick floures, and in fair and pertinent comparisons, as it shall retain the lustre of a poem although in prose.”

The King proceeds touching many curious points concerning the Prince’s bodily exercises and “ house-pastimes.” A genuine picture of the customs and manners of the age : our royal author

had the eye of an observer, and the thoughtfulness of a sage.

The King closes with the hope that the Prince's "natural inclination will have a happier simpathie with these precepts; making the wise man's schoolmaister, which is the example of others, to be your teacher; and not that overlate repentance by your own experience, which is the schoolmaister of fools."

Thus have I opened the book, and, I believe, the heart of James I. The volume remains a perpetual witness to posterity of the intellectual capacity and the noble disposition of the royal author.

But this monarch has been unfairly reproached, both by the political and religious; as far as these aspersions

connect themselves with his character, they enter into our inquiry.

His speeches and his writings are perpetually quoted by democratic writers, with the furious zeal of those who are doing the work of a faction — they never separate the character of James from his speculative principles of government ; and, such is the odium they have raised against him, that this sovereign has received the execration, or the ridicule, even of those who do not belong to their party. James maintained certain abstract doctrines of the times, and had written on “ The Prerogative Royal,” and “ The Trew Laws of Free Monarchies,” as he had on witches and devils. All this verbal

despotism is artfully converted into so many acts of despotism itself; and thus they contrive their dramatic exhibition of a blustering tyrant, in the person of a father of his people, who exercised his power without an atom of brutal despotism adhering to it.

When James asserted, that a king is above the laws, he did not understand this in the popular sense; nor was he the inventor, or the reviver of similar doctrines. In all his mysterious flights on the nature of “The Prerogative Royal,” James only maintained what Elizabeth had, as jealously, but more energetically exercised.* The King

* In Sir Symond D'Ewes's Journals of the Parliament, and in Townshend's Historical Col-

employed the style of absolute power, and, as Harris says, “ entertained notions of his prerogative amazingly great, and bordering on impiety.” It never occurred to his calumniators, who are always writing, without throwing themselves back into the age of their

lections, we trace in some degree Elizabeth’s arbitrary power concealed in her prerogative, which she always considered as the dissolving charm in the magical circle of our constitution. But I possess two letters of the French ambassador to Charles IX. written from our court in her reign; who, by means of his secret intercourse with those about her person, details a curious narrative of a royal interview granted to some deputies of the parliament, at that moment refractory, strongly depicting the exalted notions this great sovereign entertained of the prerogative, and which she asserted in stamping her foot.

inquiries, that all the political reveries, the abstract notions, and the metaphysical fancies of James I. arose from his studious desire of being an English sovereign, according to the English constitution—for from thence he derived those very ideas.

The truth is, that lawyers, in their anxiety to define, or to defend the shadowy limits of the royal prerogative, had contrived some strange and clumsy fictions, to describe its powers; and they have flattered the imaginary being, whom they called the Sovereign, more monstrously than the harmless abstractions of James I.

They describe an English sovereign, as a mysterious being, invested with ab-

solute perfection and a fabulous immortality, whose person was inviolable by its sacredness. A king of England is not subject to death, since the sovereign is a corporation, expressed by the awful plural the *OUR* and the *WE*. His majesty is always of full age, though in infancy ; and so unlike mortality, the king can do no wrong. Such his ubiquity, that he acts at the same moment in different places ; and such the force of his testimony, that whatever the sovereign declares to have passed in his presence, becomes instantly a perpetual record ; he serves for his own witness, by the simple subscription of *Teste me ipso* ; and he is so absolute in power, beyond the laws, that he quashes them by his

negative voice.* Such was the origin of the theoretical prerogative of an ideal sovereign, which James I. had formed : it was a mere curious abstraction of the schools in the spirit of the age, which was perpetually referring to the mysteries of state and the secrets of empires, and not a principle he was practising to the detriment of the subject.

* Such are the descriptions of the British Sovereign, to be found in Cowell's curious book, entitled " The Interpreter." The reader may further trace the modern genius of Blackstone, not like another Æneas, combating the chimeras, but, with an awful reverence, dignifying the venerable nonsense—and the commentator on Blackstone sometimes labouring to explain the explanations of his master ; so obscure, so abstract, and so delicate, is the phantom which our ancient lawyers conjured up, and which the moderns cannot lay.

James I. while he held for his first principle that a sovereign is only accountable to God for the sins of his government, a harmless and even a noble principle in a religious prince, at various times acknowledged that “ a king is ordained for procuring the prosperity of his people.” In his speech, 1603, he says,

“ If you be rich I cannot be poor ; if you be happy I cannot but be fortunate. My worldly felicity consists in your prosperity. And that I am a Servant is most true, as I am a head and governour of all the people in my dominions. If we take the people as one body, then as the head is ordained for the body and not the body for the head, so must a righteous king know himself to be ordained for his people, and not his people for him.”

The truth is always concealed by

those writers who are cloaking their antipathy against monarchy, in their declamations against the writings of James I. Authors, who are so often influenced by the opinions of their age, have the melancholy privilege of perpetuating them, and of being quoted !

At this time the true principles of popular liberty, hidden in the constitution, were yet obscure and contested ; involved in contradiction, in assertion, and recantation ;* and they have been established as much by the blood, as by the ink of our patriots. Some

* Cowell, equally learned and honest, involved himself in contradictory positions, and was alike prosecuted by the King and the Commons, on opposite principles. The overbearing Coke seems

noble spirits in the Commons were then struggling to fix the vacillating principles of our government; but often their private passions were infused into their public feelings; and James, who was apt to perceive a personal enemy in the individual, and found rivals of equal weight eager to oppose the novel opinionist, who was aiming at his mysterious prerogative, retreated still farther into the depths and arcana of the constitution. Modern writers have viewed the political fancies of this

to have aimed at his life, which the lenity of James saved. His work is a testimony of the unsettled principles of liberty at that time; Cowell was compelled to appeal to one part of his book to save himself from the other.

monarch through optical instruments not invented in his days.

When Sir Edward Coke declared that the king's royal prerogative, being unlimited and undefined, "was a great overgrown monster;" and, on one occasion, when Coke said before the King, that "his Majesty was defended by the laws,"—James in anger told him, he spoke foolishly, and he said he was not defended by the laws, but by God, (alluding to his "divine right"); and sharply reprimanded him for having spoken irreverently of Sir Thomas Crompton, a civilian; asserting, that Crompton was as good a man as Coke. The fact is, there then existed a rivalry between the civil and the common law-

yers. Coke declared the common law of England was in imminent danger of being perverted; and his patriotism was quickened by a party-spirit. Coke was strenuously opposed by Lord Bacon and by the civilians, and was at length committed to the Tower (according to a MS. letter of the day, for the cause is obscure in our history), “ charged with speaking so in parliament, as tended to stir up the subjects’ hearts against their sovereign.”* Yet in all this we must not regard James as the despot he is represented: he acted as Elizabeth would have acted, for the sacredness of his own person, and the integrity of the

* The following anecdotes of Lord Chief Justice Coke have not been published. They are

constitution. In the same manuscript letter I find that, when at Theobald's,

extracts from manuscript letters of the times : on that occasion, at first, the patriot did not conduct himself with the firmness of a great spirit.

Nov. 19, 1616.

“ The thunderbolt hath fallen on the Lord Coke, which hath overthrown him from the very roots. The supersedeas was carried to him by Sir George Coppin, who, at the presenting of it, received it with dejection and tears. *Tremor et successio non cadunt in fortem et constantem.* I send you a distich on the Lord Coke.

Jus condere Cocus potuit, sed condere jure
Non potuit ; potuit condere jura cocis.”

It happened that the name of Coke, or rather Cook, admitted of being punned on, both in Latin and in English : for he was lodged in the Tower, in a room that had once been a kitchen, and, as soon as he arrived, one had written on the door, which he read at his entrance—

“ This room has long wanted a Cook.”

“ The Prince interceding lately for *Edward*

the King with his usual openness was discoursing how he designed to govern;

Coke, his Majesty answered, "He knew no such man." When the Prince interceded by the name of Mr. *Coke*, his Majesty still answered, "He knew none of that name neither; but he knew there was one Captain *Coke*, the leader of the faction in parliament."

In another letter, *Coke* appears with greater dignity.—When Lord Arundel was sent by the King to *Coke*, a prisoner in the Tower, to inform him that his Majesty would allow him to consult with eight of the best learned in the law, to advise him for his cause; *Coke* thanked the King, but he knew himself to be accounted to have as much skill in the law as any man in England, and therefore needed no such help, nor feared to be judged by the law. He knew his Majesty might easily find, in such a one as he, whereby to take away his head, but for this he feared not what could be said.

"I have heard you affirm," said Lord Arundel, "that by law, he that should go about to with-

and as he would sometimes, like the wits of all nations and times, compress an argument into a play on words,—the King said, “ I will govern according to the good of the *common-weal*, but not according to the *common-will*!”

But what were the real thoughts and feelings of this presumed despot con-

draw the subjects’ hearts from their king, was a traitor.”—Sir Edward answered, “ That he held him an arch-traitor.”

James I. said of Coke, “ That he had so many shifts, that, throw him where you would, he still fell upon his legs.”

This affair ended with putting Sir Edward Coke on his knees before the council-table, with an order to retire to a private life, to correct his book of Reports, and occasionally to consult the King himself.—This part of Coke’s history is fully opened in Mr. Alexander Chalmers’s Biog. Dictionary.

cerning the duties of a sovereign? His Platonic conceptions inspired the most exalted feelings ; but his gentle nature never led to one act of unfeeling despotism. His sceptre was wreathed with the roses of his fancy : the iron of arbitrary power only struck into the heart in the succeeding reign. James only menaced with an abstract notion ; or, in anger, with his own hand would tear out a protestation from the journals of the Commons : and, when he considered a man as past forgiveness, he condemned him to a slight imprisonment ; or removed him to a distant employment ; or, if an author, like Coke and Cowell, sent him into retirement to correct his works.

In a great court of judicature, when the interference of the royal authority was ardently solicited, the magnanimous monarch replied :

“ Kings ruled by their laws, as God did by the laws of nature: and ought as rarely to put in use their supreme authority, as God does his power of working miracles.”

Notwithstanding his abstract principles, his knowledge and reflection shewed him that there is a crisis in monarchies and a period in empires; and, in discriminating between a king and a tyrant, he tells the Prince,

“ A tyranne’s miserable and infamous life armeth in end his own subiects to become his bureaux; and although this rebellion be ever unlawful on their part, yet is the world so wearied of him, that his fall is little meaned (minded) by

the rest of his subjects, and smiled at by his neighbours."

And he desires that the Prince, his son, should so perform his royal duties, that, "in case ye fall in the high-way, yet it should be with the honourable report and just regret of all honest men." In the dedicatory sonnet to Prince Henry of the Basilicon Doron, in verses not without elevation, James admonishes the prince to

"Represse the proud, maintaining aye the right ;
Walk always so, as ever in his sight,
Who guards the godly, plaguing the prophane."

The poems of James I. are the versifications of a man of learning and meditation. Such an one could not

fail of producing lines which reflect the mind of their author. I find in a MS. these couplets, which condense an impressive thought on his favourite subject :

“ Crownes have their compasse, length of daies
 their date,
 Triumphs their tombes, Felicitie her fate;
 Of more than earth, can earth make none par-
 taker;
 But knowledge makes the King most like his
 Maker.”*

These are among the elevated conceptions the King had formed of the character of a sovereign, and the feeling was ever present in his mind. James has preserved an anecdote of Henry

* Harl. MSS. 6824.

VIII. in commenting on it, which serves our purpose :

“ It was strange,” said James I. “ to look into the life of Henry VIII. how like an epicure he lived ! Henry once asked whether he might be saved ? He was answered, ‘ That he had no cause to fear, having lived so mighty a king.’—‘ But oh !’ said he, ‘ I have lived, too like a king.’ He should rather have said, not like a king—for the office of a king is to do justice and equity : but he only served his sensuality, like a beast.”

Henry VII. was the favourite character of James I. ; and it was to gratify the King that Lord Bacon wrote the life of this wise and prudent monarch. It is remarkable of James I. that he never mentioned the name of Elizabeth without some expressive epithet of reverence : such as, “ The late

queen of famous memory,"—a circumstance not common among kings, who do not like to remind the world of the reputation of a great predecessor. But it suited the generous temper of that man to extol the greatness he admired, whose philosophic toleration was often known to have pardoned the libel on himself for the redeeming virtue of its epigram. In his forgiving temper James I. would call such effusions "the superfluities of idle brains."

But while the mild government of this monarch has been covered with the political odium of arbitrary power, he has also incurred a religious one, from his design of rendering the Sabbath, a day for the poor, alike of devo-

tion and enjoyment, hitherto practised in England, as it is still throughout Europe. Plays were performed on Sundays at court in Elizabeth's reign ; and " the Protestants of Elizabeth " was the usual expressive phrase in the succeeding reigns, to mark those who did most honour to the Reformed. The King, returning from Scotland, found the people in Lancashire discontented from the unusual deprivation of their popular recreations, on Sundays and holidays, after the church-service. " With our own ears we heard the general complaint of our people." The Catholic priests were busily insinuating among the lower orders, that the reformed religion was a sullen depriva-

tion of all mirth and social amusements, and thus “ turning the people’s hearts.” But, while they were denied what the King terms “ lawful recreations,”* they had substituted more vicious ones: alehouses were more frequented—drunkenness more general—tale-mon-gery and sedition, the vices of sedentary idleness, prevailed; while a fanatical gloom was spreading over the country.

The King, whose gaiety of temper instantly sympathised with the multitude, and perhaps alarmed at this new

* These are enumerated to consist of dancing, archery, leaping, vaulting, May-games, Whitsun-ales, Morris dances, and the setting up of May-poles, and other manly sports.

shape which puritanism was assuming, published what is called “ The Book of Sports,” and which soon obtained the contemptuous term of “ The Dancing Book.”

On this subject our recent principles have hitherto governed our decisions : with our habits formed, and our notions finally adjusted, this singular state-paper has been reprobated by piety ; whose zeal, however, is not sufficiently historical. It was one of the state-maxims of this philosophic monarch, in his advice to his son,

“ To allure the common people to a common amitie among themselves ; and that certain daies in the yeere should be appointed for delighting the people with public spectacles of all honest

games, and exercise of arms ; making playes and lawful games in Maie, and good cheare at Christmas ; as also for convening of neighbours, for entertaining friendship and heartliness, by honest feasting and merriness—so that the sabbotbes be kept holie, and no unlawful pastime be used. This form of contenting the people's minds hath be used in all well-governed republics."

James, therefore, was shocked at the sudden melancholy among the people. In Europe, even among the reformed themselves, the sabbath, after church-service, was a festival-day ; and the wise monarch could discover no reason why, in his kingdom, it should prove a day of penance and self-denial : but, when once this unlucky " Book of Sports" was thrown among the nation, they discovered, to their own astonish-

ment, that every thing concerning the nature of the sabbath was uncertain.

And, because they knew nothing, they wrote much. The proper hour of the sabbath was not agreed on: Was it to commence on the Saturday-eve? Others thought that Time, having a circular motion, the point we begin at was not important, provided the due portion be completed. Another declared, in his “ Sunday no Sabbath,” that it was merely an ecclesiastical day, which may be changed at pleasure; as they were about doing it, in the church of Geneva, to Thursday, — probably from their antipathy to the Catholic Sunday, as those Catholics had anciently changed it from the Jewish

Saturday. This had taken place, had the Thursday voters not formed the minority. Another asserted, that Sunday was a working day, and that Saturday was the perpetual sabbath.* Some deemed the very name of Sunday profaned the Christian mouth, as allusive to the Saxon idolatry of that day being dedicated to the sun; and hence they sanctified it with the “ Lord’s Day.” Others were strenuous advocates for closely copying the austerity of the Jewish sabbath, in all the rigour of the Levitical law; forbidding meat to be dressed, houses swept, fires kindled, &c.—the day of rest was to be a day of mortification. But this spread an

* Collier’s Ecc. Hist. Vol. II. 758.

alarm, that “the old rotten ceremonial law of the Jews, which had been buried in the grave of Jesus,” was about to be revived. And so prone is man to the reaction of opinion, that, from observing the sabbath with a Judaic austerity, some were for rejecting “Lord’s Days” altogether; asserting, they needed not any; because, in their elevated holiness, all days to them were Lord’s days.* A popular preacher at the Temple,

* Fuller’s Church Hist. b. xi. 149. One of the most curious books of this class is Heylin’s “History of the Sabbath;” a work abounding with uncommon researches; it was written in favour of Charles’s declaration for reviving lawful sports on Sundays. Warton in the *first* edition of Milton’s juvenile poems, observed in a note on the Lady’s speech, in Comus, verse 177, that “it is owing to the Puritans ever since Cromwell’s time

who was disposed to keep alive a cheerful spirit among the people, yet desirous that the sacred day should not pass like any other, moderated between the parties. He declared it was to be

that *Sunday* has been made in England a day of gravity and severity: and many a staunch observer of the rites of the Church of England little suspects that he is conforming to the *Calvanism* of an *English Sunday*." It is probable this gave unjust offence to grave heads unfurnished with their own national history—for in the *second edition* Warton cancelled the note. Truth is thus violated. The Puritans, disgusted with the levities and excesses of the age of James and Charles, as is usual on these points, vehemently threw themselves into an opposite direction; but they perhaps advanced too far in converting the sabbath-day into a sullen and gloomy reserve of pharisaical austerity. Adam Smith and Paley have taken more enlightened views on this subject.

observed with strictness only by “ persons of quality.”*

One of the chief causes of the civil war is traced to the revival of this “ Book of Sports.” Thus it happened that, from the circumstance of our good-tempered monarch discovering the populace in Lancashire discontented, being debarred from their rustic sports; and,

* “ Let servants, (he says) whose hands are ever working, whilst their eyes are waking; let such who all the foregoing week had their cheeks moistened with sweat, and their hands hardened with labour, let such have some recreations on the Lord’s day indulged to them; whilst *persons of quality*, who may be said to keep sabbath all the week long—I mean, who rest from hard labour—are concerned in conscience to observe the Lord’s day with the greater abstinence from recreations.”

exhorting them, out of his *bon hommie*, and “ fatherly love, which he owed to them all,” (as he said) to recover their cheerful habits, he was innocently involving the country in divinity, and in civil war. James I. would have started with horror at the “ Book of Sports,” could he have presciently contemplated the archbishop, and the sovereign who persisted to revive it, dragged to the block.—What invisible threads suspend together the most remote events !

The parliament’s armies usually chose Sundays for their battles, that the profanation of the day might be expiated by a field-sacrifice, and that the sabbath-breakers should receive a signal punishment. The opinions of

the nature of the sabbath were, even in the succeeding reign, so opposite and novel, that plays were performed before Charles on Sundays. James I. who knew nothing of such opinions, has been unjustly aspersed by those who live in more settled times, when such matters have been more wisely established than ever they were discussed.*

* It is remarkable of James I. that he never pressed for the performance of any of his proclamations; and his facile disposition made him more tolerant than appears in our history. At this very time, the conduct of a lord-mayor of London has been preserved by Wilson, as a proof of his piety, and, it may be added, of his wisdom. It is here adduced as an evidence of the King's generous temper, and his usual conduct.

The King's carriage removing to Theobald's on the sabbath, occasioned a great clatter and

The King's aversion to war has been attributed to his pusillanimity—as if personal was the same thing as political courage ; and as if a king placed himself in the field of battle by a proclamation for war. The idle tale that James trembled at the mere view of a

noise in the time of divine service The lord-mayor commanded them to be stopped, and the officers of the carriage returning to the King, made violent complaints. The King, in a rage, swore he thought that there had been no more kings in England than himself; and sent a warrant to the lord-mayor to let them pass; which he obeyed, observing, “ While it was in my power, I did my duty; but that being taken away by a higher power, it is my duty to obey.” The good sense of the lord-mayor so highly gratified James, that the King complimented him, and thanked him for it. Of such gentleness was the arbitrary power of James composed !

naked sword, which is quoted as an instance of the effects of sympathy over the infant in the womb from his mother's terror at the assassination of Rizzio, is probably not true, yet still serves the purpose of inconsiderate writers to shew his excessive pusillanimity ; but there is another idle tale of an opposite nature, which is certainly true ; In passing from Berwick into his new kingdom, the King, with his own hand, “ shot out of a cannon so fayre and with so great judgment,” as convinced the cannoneers of the King's skill “ in great artillery,” as Stowe records. It is probable, after all, that James I. was not deficient in personal courage, although this is not of conse-

quence in his literary and political character. Several instances are recorded of his intrepidity. But the absurd charge of his pusillanimity and his pedantry, &c. has been carried so far, as to suppose that it affected his character as a sovereign. The warm and hasty Burnet says at once, of James I. "He was despised by all abroad as a pedant without true judgment, courage, or steadiness." This "pedant," however, had "the true judgment and steadiness" to obtain his favourite purpose, which was the preservation of a continued peace. If James I. was sometimes despised by foreign powers, it was because an insular king, who will not consume the blood and treasure of

his people (and James had neither to spare) may be little regarded on the continent; the Machiavels of foreign cabinets will look with contempt on the domestic blessings a British sovereign would scatter among his subjects; his presence with the foreigners is only felt in his armies; and they seek to allure him to fight their battles and to involve him in their interests.

James looked with a cold eye on the military adventurer: he said, “No man gains by war but he that hath not wherewith to live in peace.” But there was also a secret motive, which made the King a lover of peace, and which he once thus confidentially opened:

“ A king of England had no reason but to seek always to decline a war ; for though the sword was indeed in his hand, the purse was in the people’s. One could not go without the other. Suppose a supply were levied to begin the fray, what certainty could he have that he should not want sufficient to make an honourable end ? If he called for subsidies, and did not obtain, he must retreat ingloriously. He must beg an alms, with such conditions as would break the heart of majesty, through capitulations that *some members would make, who desire to improve the reputation of their wisdom, by retrenching the dignity of the crown in popular declamations,* and thus he must buy the soldier’s pay, or fear the danger of a mutiny.*

Thus James I. perpetually accused of exercising arbitrary power, confesses a humiliating dependence on the Commons ; and, on the whole, at a time

* Hacket’s Life of Lord Keeper Williams, p. 80. The whole is distinguished by italics, as the King’s own words.

when prerogative and privilege were alike indefinite and obscure, the King received from them hard and rigorous usage. A king of peace claimed the indulgence, if not the gratitude, of the people; and the sovereign who was zealous to correct the abuses of his government, was not distinguished, by the Commons, from him who insolently would perpetuate them.

When the Commons were not in good humour with Elizabeth, or James, they contrived three methods of inactivity, running the time to waste—*nihil agendo*, or *aliud agendo*, or *malè agendo*; doing nothing, doing something else, or doing evilly.* In one of

* I find this description in a MS. letter of the times.

these irksome moments, waiting for subsidies, Elizabeth anxiously inquired of the speaker, “ What had passed in the lower house ? ” He replied, “ If it please your Majesty—seven weeks.” On one of these occasions, when the queen, who always broke into a passion when the settlement of the succession was urged, and which now they were earnest to have done, one of the deputies of the Commons informed her Majesty, that “ the Commons would never *speak* about a subsidy, or any other matter whatever ; and that hitherto nothing but the most trivial discussions had passed in parliament : which was, therefore, a great assembly rendered

entirely useless,—and all were desirous of returning home.”*

But the more easy and open nature of James I. endured greater hardships: with the habit of studious men, the King had an utter carelessness of money and a generosity of temper, which Hacket, in his *Life of the Lord-Keeper Williams*, has described. “The King was wont to give like a king, and for the most part to keep one act of liberality warm with the covering of another.” He seemed to have had no distinct notions of total

* From a MS. letter of the French ambassador, La Mothe Fenelon, to Charles IX. then at the court of London, in my possession.

amounts ; he was once so shocked at the sight of the money he had granted away, laying in heaps on a table, that he instantly reduced it to half the sum. It appears that parliament never granted even the ordinary supplies they had given to his predecessors ; his chief revenue was drawn from the customs ; and his debts, of which I find an account in the parliamentary history, after a reign of twenty-one years, did not amount to £200,000.* This monarch could not have been so wasteful of his revenues, as it is presumed. James I. was always poor, always generous, and left scarcely any debts. He must have lived amidst many self-deprivations ;

* Parl. Hist. Vol. V. 147.

nor was this difficult to practise for this king, for he was a philosopher, indifferent to the common and imaginary wants of the vulgar of royalty. Whenever he threw himself into the arms of his parliament, they left him without a feeling of his distress. In one of his speeches he says,

“ In the last parliament I laid open the true thoughts of my heart; but I may say, with our Saviour, ‘ I have piped to you, and you have not danced; I have mourned, and you have not lamented.’ I have reigned eighteen years, in which time you have had peace, and I have received far less supply than hath been given to any king since the Conquest.”

Thus James, denied the relief he claimed, was forced on those wretched expedients of selling patents for mono-

polies, craving benevolences, or free gifts, &c. ; the monopolies had been usual in Elizabeth's reign ; yet all our historians agree, that his subjects were never grievously oppressed by such occasional levies ; this was even the confession of the contemporaries of this monarch. They were every day becoming wealthier by those acts of peace they despised the monarch for maintaining. “ The kingdom, since his reign began, was luxuriant in gold and silver, far above the scant of our fathers who lived before us,” are the words of a contemporary.* All flourished about the King, except the King himself. James I. discovered how light and

* Hacket's Life of Lord Keeper Williams.

hollow was his boasted “ prerogative-royal,” which, by its power of dissolving the parliament, could only keep silent those who had already refused him.

A wit of the day described the parliaments of James by this ludicrous distich :

“ Many faults complained of, few things
amended,
A subsidy granted, the parliament ended.”

But this was rarely the fact. Sometimes they addressed James I. by what the King called a “ stinging-petition ;” or, when the ministers, passing over in silence the motion of the Commons, pressed for supplies, the heads of a party replied, that to grant them were

to put an end to parliament. But they practised expedients and contrivances, which comported as little with the dignity of a British senate, as with the majesty of the sovereign.

At a late hour, when not a third part of the house remained, and that those who required a fuller house were neither seen nor heard, amidst darkness and confusion, they made a protest,—of which the King approved as little of the ambiguous matter, as the surreptitious means; and it was then, that, with his own hand, he tore the leaf out of the journal.* In the sessions of 1614 the King was still more indignant at their proceedings. He and the Scotch

* Rushworth, Vol. I. 54.

had been vilified by their invectives; and they were menaced by two lawyers, with “a Sicilian vespers, or a Parisian matins.” They aimed to reduce the King to beggary, by calling in question a third part of his revenue, contesting his prerogative in levying his customs. On this occasion I find that, publicly, in the banquetting-house at Whitehall, the King tore all their bills before their faces; and, as not a single act was passed, in the phrase of the day, this was called an *addle* parliament.* Such unhappy proceedings indicated the fatal divisions of the succeeding reign. A meeting, of a different complexion, once occurred in

* From a MS. letter of the times.

1621, late in James's reign. The monopolies were then abolished. The King and the Prince shed reciprocal tears in the house; and the Prince wept when he brought an affectionate message of thanks from the Commons. The letter-writer says, "It is a day worthy to be kept holiday; some say it shall, but I believe them not." It never was; for even this parliament broke up with the cries of "some tribunitial orators," as James designated the pure and the impure democratic spirits. Smollet remarks in his margin, that the King endeavoured to *cajole* the Commons. Had he known of the royal tears, he had still heightened the phrase. Hard fate of kings!

Should ever their tears attest the warmth of honest feelings, they must be thrown out of the pale of humanity : for Francis Osborne, that cynical republican, declares, that “there are as few abominable princes as tolerable kings ; because princes must court the public favour before they attain supreme power, and then change their nature !” Such is the egotism of republicanism !

• The character of James I. has always been taken from certain scandalous chronicles, whose origin requires detection. It is this mud which has darkened and disturbed the clear stream of history. The reigns of Elizabeth and James teemed with libels in church and state from opposite parties : the idleness of the

pacific court of James I. hatched a
 viperous brood of a less hardy, but per-
 haps of a more malignant nature, than
 the Martin Mar-prelates of the pre-
 ceding reign. Those boldly at once
 wrote treason, and, in some respects,
 honestly dared the rope which could
 only silence Penry and his party; but
 these only reached to *scandalum mag-*
natum, and the puny wretches could
 only have crept into a pillory. In the
 times of the commonwealth, when all
 things were agreeable which vilified
 our kings, these secret histories were
 dragged from their lurking holes. The
 writers are meagre Suetoniuses and
 Procopiuses; a set of self-elected spies
 in the court; gossippers, lounging in

the same circle ; eaves-droppers ; pry-ers into corners ; buzzers of reports ; and punctual scribes of what the French (so skilful in the profession) technically term, *les on dits* ; that is, things that might never have happened, although they are recorded : registered for posterity in many a scandalous chronicle, they have been mistaken for histories ; and include so many truths and falsehoods, that it becomes unsafe for the historian either to credit or to disbelieve them.*

* Most of these works were meanly printed, and were usually found in a state of filth and rags, and would have perished in their own merited neglect, had they not been recently *splendidly reprinted*. Thus the garbage has been cleanly laid on a fashionable epergne, and found quite to the taste of certain

Such was the race generated in this court of peace and indolence ! And

lovers of authentic history ! Sir Anthony Weldon, in his " Court of King James," is supposed to have acquired much of his secret history from the King's kitchen, of which he was clerk. " The five years of King James," which passes under the name of Sir Fulk Greville, the dignified friend of the romantic Sir Philip Sidney, is certainly a Presbyterian's third day's hash,—for there are parts copied from Arthur Wilson's History of James I. who was himself the pensioner of a disappointed courtier, yet this writer never attacks the personal character of the King, though charged with having scraped up many tales maliciously false.—Osborne is a misanthropical politician, who cuts with the most corroding pen that ever rottened a man's name. James was very negligent in dress ; graceful appearances did not come into his studies.—Weldon tells us how the King was trussed on horseback, and fixed there like a pedlar's pack, or a lump of inanimate matter ; the truth is, the King had always an infirmity in his legs. Further we are told, that

Hacket, in his *Life of the Lord-Keeper Williams*, without disguising the fact,

this ridiculous monarch allowed his hat to remain just as it chanced to be placed on his head.—Osborne once saw this unlucky king “ in a green hunting-dress, with a feather in his cap, and a horn, instead of a sword, by his side ; how suitable to his age, calling, or person, I leave others to judge from his pictures :” and this he bitterly calls “ leaving him dressed for posterity !” This is the style which passes for history with some readers.—Hume observes, that “ hunting,” which was James’s sole recreation, necessary for his health, as a sedentary scholar, “ is the cheapest a king can indulge ;” and, indeed, the empty coffers of this monarch afforded no other.

Mr. Gifford observes, on these pseudo-histories, that they should have been left *sub lodice*, where most of them had birth.—They are alluded to by Arthur Wilson, as “ Monstrous satires against the King’s own person, that haunted both court and country,” when, in the wantonness of the times, “ every little miscarriage, exuberantly branched, so that evil report did often perch on

tells us, that the Lord-Keeper “spared not for cost to purchase the most certain intelligence, by his feed-pensioners, of *every hour's occurrences at court*; and was wont to say, that no man could be a statesman without a great deal of money.”

We catch many glimpses of these times in another branch of the same family. When newsbooks, as the first newspapers were called, did not yet

them.”—Fuller has designated these suspicious scribes as “a generation of people who, like *moths*, have lurked under the carpets of the council-table, and even like *fleas*, have leaped into the pillows of the prince's bedchamber, and, to enhance the reputation of their knowledge, thence derived that of all things which were, or were not, ever done or thought of.”—Church Hist. b. x. 87.

exist to appease the hungering curiosity of the country, a voluminous correspondence was carried on between residents in the metropolis and their country friends: these letters chiefly remain in their MS. state.* Great men then employed a scribe who had a talent this way, and sometimes a confidential friend, to convey to them the secret history of the times; and, on the whole, they are composed by a better sort of writers: for, as they had no other design than to inform their friends of the true state of passing events, they were eager to correct, by subsequent

* Mr. Lodge's "Illustrations of British History" is the most eminent and elegant work of the *minutiæ historicae*.

accounts, the lies of the day they sometimes sent down. They have preserved some fugitive events useful in historical researches ; but their pens are garrulous,—and it requires some experience to discover the character of the writers, to be enabled to adopt their opinions and their statements. Little things were, however, great matters to these diurnalists ; much time was spent in learning of those at court, who had quarrelled, or were on the point ; who were seen to have bit their lips, and looked downcast ; who was budding, and whose full-blown flower was drooping ; then we have the sudden reconciliation, and the anticipated fallings-

out ; with a deal of the *pourquoi* of the *pourquoi*.*

* Some specimens of this sort of correspondence of the idleness of the times may amuse. The learned Mede, to his friend Sir Martin Stuteville, chronicles a fracas. “ I am told of a great falling out between my Lord Treasurer and my Lord Digby, insomuch that they came to *pedlar's blood* and *traitor's blood*. It was about some money which my Lord Digby should have had, which my Lord Treasurer thought too much for the charge of his employment, and said himself could go in as good a fashion for half the sum. But my Lord Digby replies, that he could not *peddle* so well as his lordship.”

A lively genius sports with a fanciful pen in conveying the same kind of intelligence, and so nice in the shades of curiosity, that he can describe a quarrel before it takes place.

“ You know the *primum mobile* of our court (Buckingham), by whose motion all the other spheres must move, or else stand still: the bright

Such was this race of gossippers in the environs of a court, steeped in a supine lethargy of peace : the other classes of

sun of our firmament, at whose splendour or glooming all our marygolds of the court open or shut. There are in higher spheres as great as he, but none so glorious. But the King is in progress, and we are far from court. Now to hear certainties. It is told me, that my Lord of Pembroke and my Lord of Rochester are so far out, as it is almost come to a quarrel ; I know not how true this is, but Sir Thomas Overbury and my Lord of Pembroke have been long jarring, and therefore the other is likely."

Among the numerous MS. letters of this kind, I have often observed the writer uneasy at the scandal he has seasoned his letter with, and concluding earnestly that his letter, after perusal, should be thrown to the flames. A wish which appears to have been rarely complied with ; and this may serve as a hint to some to restrain their tatling pens, if they regard their own peace ; for, on most occasions of this nature, the letters are rather preserved with particular care.

society were contaminated by the same influence. A long reign of peace, which had produced wealth in that age, engendered the extremes of luxury and want. Money-traders practised the art of decoying the gallant youths of the day into their nets ; and transforming, in a certain time, the estates of the country gentlemen into skins of parchment,

“ The wax continuing hard, the acres melting.”

MASSINGER.

Projectors and monopolists, who had obtained patents for licensing all the inns and alehouses ; for being the sole venders of manufactured articles, such as gold-lace, tobacco-pipes, starch,

soap, &c. were grinding and cheating the people to an extent which was not at first understood, although the practice had existed in the former reign. The gentry, whose family pride would vie with these *nouveaux riches*, exhausted themselves in rival profusion; all crowded to “upstart London,” deserting their country mansions, which were now left to the care of “a poor alms-woman, or a bed-rid-beadsman.”

In that day this abandonment of the ancient country hospitality for the metropolis, and this breaking up of old family establishments, crowded London with new and distinct races of idlers, or, as they would now be called, unpro-

ductive members of society. From a contemporary Manuscript, one of those spirited remonstrances addressed to the King, which it was probably thought not prudent to publish, I shall draw some extracts, as a forcible picture of the manners of the age.* Masters of ancient families, to maintain a mere exterior of magnificence in dress and equipage in the metropolis, were really at the same time hiding themselves in penury: they thrust themselves into lodgings, and “ five or six knights,

* The MS. is entitled “ Balaam’s Ass, or a True Discoverie touching the Murmurs and feared Discontents of the Times, directed to King James.” Lansdowne Collection, 209. The writer, throughout, speaks of the King with the highest respect.

or justices of peace," with all their retinue, became the inmates of a shop-keeper; yet these gentlemen had once "kept the rusty chimneys of two or three houses smoking, and had been the feeders of twenty or forty serving-men: a single page, with a guarded coat, served their turn now.

"Every one strives to be a Diogenes in his house, and an emperor in the streets; not caring if they sleep in a tub, so they may be hurried in a coach; giving that allowance to horses and mares, that formerly maintained houses full of men; pinching many a belly to paint a few backs, and burying all the treasures of the kingdom into a few citizen's coffers."

"There are now," the writer adds, "twenty thousand masterless men turned off, who know not this night where to lodge; where to eat to-morrow; and ready to undertake any desperate course."

Yet there was still a more turbulent and dangerous race of idlers, in

“ A number of younger brothers, of ancient houses, who, nursed up in fulness, pampered in their minority, and left in charge to their elder brothers, who were to be fathers to them, followed them in despair to London, where these untimely-born youths are left so bare, that their whole life's allowance was consumed in one year.”

The same Manuscript exhibits a full and spirited picture of manners, in this long period of peace.

“ The Gentry are like owls, all feathers and no flesh ; all show, and no substance ; all fashion, and no feeding ; and fit for no service but masks and May-games. The Citizens have dealt with them as it is said the Indians are dealt with ; they have given them counterfeit broaches and bugle-bracelets for gold and silver ;* pins and peacock

* Sir Giles Mompesson and Sir James Mitchell had the monopolies of gold lace, which they sold

feathers for lands and tenements, gilded coaches and outlandish hobby horses for goodly castles and ancient mansions ; their woods are turned into wardrobes, their leases into laces, and their goods

in a counterfeit state ; and, not only cheated the people, but, by a mixture of copper, the ornaments made of it are said to have rotted the flesh. As soon as the grievance was shewn to James, he expressed his abhorrence of the practice ; and even declared, that no person connected with the villainous frauds should escape punishment. The brother of his favourite, Buckingham, was known to be one, and, with Sir Giles Overreach, (as Massinger conceals the name of Mompesson) were compelled to fly the country. The style of James, in his speech, is indeed different from kings speeches in parliament : he speaks as indignantly as any individual who was personally aggrieved. “ Three patents at this time have been complained of, and thought great grievances ; my purpose is to strike them all dead, and, that time may not be lost, I will have it done presently. Had these things been complained of to me, before the parliament, I could have done the

and chattels into guarded coats and gaudy toys. Should your Majesty fly to them for relief, you would fare like those birds that peck at painted fruits; all outside." The writer then describes the affected penurious habits of the grave citizens, who were then preying on the country gentlemen:—"When those big swoln leeches, that have thus sucked them, wear rags, eat roots, speak like jugglers that have reeds in their mouths; look like spittle-men, especially when your Majesty hath occasion to use them; their fat lies in their hearts, their substance is buried

office of a just king, and have punished them; peradventure more than now ye intend to do. No private person whatsoever, were he ever so dear unto me, shall be respected by me by many degrees as the public good; and I hope, my lords, that ye will do me that right to publish to my people this my heart purposes. Proceed judicially; spare none, where ye find just cause to punish: but remember, that laws have not their eyes in their necks, but in their foreheads."—
Rushworth, vol. i. 26.

in their bowels, and he that will have it must first take their lives. Their study is to get, and their chiefest care to conceal; and most from yourself, gracious sir; not a commodity comes from their hand, but you pay a noble in the pound for *book-ing*, which they call *forbearing*.* They think it lost time if they double not their principal in two years. They have attractive powders to draw these flies into their claws; they will entice men with honey into their hives, and with wax entangle them;† they pack the cards, and their con-

* The credit which these knavish traders gave their customers, who could not conveniently pay their money down, was carried to an exorbitant charge: since, even in Elizabeth's reign, it was one of the popular grievances brought into parliament—it is there called, “A Bill against *Double Payments of Book-Debts*.” One of the country members who made a speech, consisting entirely of proverbs, said, “Pay the reckoning over night, and you shall not be troubled in the morning.”

† In the life of a famous usurer of that day, who died worth L 400,000, an amazing sum at

federates, the lords, deal, by which means no other men have ever good game. They have in a few years laid up riches for many, and yet, can never be content to say—*Soul, take thy rest, or hand receive no more; do no more wrong*: but still they labour to join house to house, and land to land. What want they of being kings, but the name? Look into the shires and counties, where, with their purchased lordships and manors, one of their private letters has equal power with your

that period, we find the numberless expedients and contrivances of the money trader, practised on improvident landholders and careless heirs, to entangle them in his nets. He generally contrived to make the wood pay for the land, which he called “making the feathers pay for the goose.” He never pressed hard for his loans, but fondly compared his bonds “to infants, which battle best by sleeping;” to battle, is to be nourished—a term still retained in the battle-book of the university. I shall, elsewhere, preserve the character and habits of the money-dealer, in the age of James I.

Majesty's privy seal.* It is better to be one of their hinds, than your Majesty's gentleman usher; one of their grooms, than your guards. What care they, if it be called tribute or no, so long as it comes in termly, or whether their chamber be called Exchequer, or the dens of cheaters, so that the money be left there."

* It is observed, in the same life, that his mortgages, and statutes, and his judgments, were so numerous, that his papers would have made a good map of England. A view of the chamber of this usurer is preserved by Massinger, who can only be understood by the modern reader in Mr. Gifford's edition.

Here lay

A manor, bound fast in a skin of parchment,
 Here a sure deed of gift for a market-town,
 If not redeem'd this day, which is not in
 The unthrift's purse; there being scarce one shire
 In Wales or England, where my monies are not
 Lent out at usury, the certain hook
 To draw in more,

MASSINGER'S CITY MADAM.

This cry against the crushing usury of the times, was not merely a popular prejudice, but a real calamity; for although in the present extraordinary age of calculations and artificial wealth, we can suffer “ a dunghill-breed of men,” like the Mompesson and his contemptible partner of this reign, to accumulate in a rapid period more than a ducal fortune without any apparent injury to the public welfare, the result was different then; the legitimate and enlarged principles of commerce were not practised by our citizens in the first æra of their prosperity; their absorbing avarice rapidly took in all the exhausting prodigality of the gentry, who were pushed back on the people to prey in

their turn on them ; those who found their own acres disappearing, became inclosers of commons ; this is one of the grievances which Massinger notices ; while the writer of the “ Five years of King James ” tells us that these discontents between the gentry and commonalty grew out into a petty rebellion ; and it appears by Peyton that “ divers of the people were hanged up.” But the intermediate classes were numerous.

The minute picture of the domestic manners of this age exhibits the result of those extremes of prodigality and avarice in the two classes of society. The King’s prodigal dispensations of honours and titles, seem at first to

have been political, for James was a foreigner, and designed to create a nobility, with an inferior order, who might feel a personal attachment for the new monarch ; but the facility by which titles were acquired, was one cause which occasioned so many to crowd to the metropolis to enjoy their airy honour by a substantial ruin ; knighthood had become so common, that some of the most infamous and criminal characters of this age, we find in that rank.* The young females,

* A statesman may read with advantage Sir Edward Walker on “ The inconveniences that have attended the frequent promotions to Titles, since King James came to the crown.” Sir Edward appears not to disapprove of these promotions during the first ten years of his reign,

driven to necessity by the fashionable ostentation of their parents, repaired to the metropolis as their market; “where,” says a contemporary, “they obtained pensions, or sometimes marriages, by their beauty.” When Gondomar, the Spanish ambassador, passed

but “when alliance to a favourite, riches though gotten in a shop, persons of private estates, and of families whose fathers would have thought themselves highly honoured to have been but knights in Queen Elizabeth’s time, were advanced, then the fruits began to appear. The greater nobility were undervalued; the ancient baronage saw inferior families take precedence over them; nobility lost its respect, and a parity in conversation was introduced which in English dispositions begot contempt; the King could not employ them all, some grew envious, some factious, some ingrateful, however obliged, by being once denied.”—p. 302.

to his house, the ladies were at their balconies on the watch, to make themselves known to him, and it appears that every one of those ladies had sold their favours at a dear rate. Among these are some, “ who pretending to be *Wits*, as they called them,” says Arthur Wilson,* “ or had handsome nieces or daughters, drew a great resort to their houses.” And it appears that Gondomar, to prevent these conversaziones from too freely touching on Spanish politics, sweetened their silence by his presents.† The same grossness

* One may conjecture, by this expression, that the term of “ *Wits*” was then introduced, in the sense we now use it.

† Wilson has preserved a characteristic trait of one of the lady wits. When Gondomar, one day,

of manners was among the higher females of the age; when we see that grave statesman, Sir Dudley Carleton, narrating the adventures of a bridal night, and all “ the petty sorceries,” the romping of the “ great ladies, who were made shorter by the skirts,” we discover their coarse tastes; but when we find the King going to the bed of the bride in his night-gown, to give a reveille matin, and remaining a good

in Drury-lane, was passing Lady Jacob's house, she exposing herself for a salutation from him; he bowed, but in return she only opened her mouth, gaping on him. This was again repeated the following day, when he sent a gentleman to complain of her incivility. She replied, that he had purchased some favours of the ladies at a dear rate, and she had a mouth to be stopt as well as others.

time in or upon the bed. “ Chuse which you will believe,” this bride was not more decent than the ladies who publicly, on their balconies, were soliciting the personal notice of Gondomar.

This coarseness of manners, which still prevailed in the nation, as it had in the court of Henry VIII. and Elizabeth, could not but influence the familiar style of their humour and conversation. James I. in the Edict on Duels, employs the expression of *our dearest bed-fellow*, to designate the Queen; and there was no indelicacy attached to this singular expression. Much of that silly and obscene correspondence of James’s with Buckingham, while it adds one

more mortifying instance of “ the follies of the wise,” must be attributed to this cause,* Are not most of the dramatic works of that day frequently unreadable from this circumstance? As an historian it would be my duty to shew how incredibly gross were the domestic language and the domestic familiarities of kings, queens, lords, and

* Our wonder and surmises have been often raised at the strange subscriptions of Buckingham to the King “ Your dog,” and James as ingeniously calling him “ dog Steenie.” But this was not peculiar to Buckingham; James also called the grave Cecil his “ little beagle.” The Earl of Worcester, writing to Cecil, who had succeeded in his search after one Bywater, the Earl says, “ If the *King's beagle* can hunt by land as well as he hath done *by water*, we will leave capping of *Jowler*, and cap the *beagle*.” The Queen writing to Buckingham to intercede with

ladies, which were much like the lowest of our populace. We may felicitate ourselves for having escaped the grossness, without, however, extending too far these self-congratulations.

The men were dissolved in all the indolence of life and its wantonness; they prided themselves in traducing their own innocence rather than suffer

the King for Rawleigh's life, addresses Buckingham by "My kind Dog." James appears to have been always playing on some whimsical appellation by which he characterised his ministers and favourites, analagous to the notions of a huntsman. The age was used to the coarseness. We did not then excel all Europe, as Addison set the model, in the delicacy of humour; indeed even so late as Congreve's time, they were discussing its essential distinction from wit.

a lady's name to pass unblemished.* The marriage-tie lost its sacredness amidst these disorders of social life. The luxurious idlers of that day were polluted with infamous vices ; and Drayton in " the Moon-calf," has elaborately drawn full-length pictures of the lady and the gentleman of that day, which seem scarcely to have required the darkening tints of satire to be hideous—in one line the Muse describes " the most prodigious birth :"

" He's too much Woman and She's too much
Man"

The trades of foppery, in Spanish

* The expression of one of these gallants, as perserved by Wilson, cannot be decently given, but is more expressive, p. 147.

fashions, suddenly sprung up in this reign, and exhibited new names and new things. Now silk and gold-lace shops first adorned Cheapside, which the continuator of Stowe calls “ the beauty of London ;” the extraordinary rise in price of these fashionable articles forms a curious contrast with those of the preceding reign. Scarfs, in Elizabeth’s time, thirty shillings value, were now wrought up to as many pounds ; and embroidered waistcoats, which in the queen’s reign no workman knew how to make worth five pounds, were now so rich and curious, as to be cheapened at forty. Stowe has recorded a revolution in shoe-buckles, portentously closing in shoe-roses,

which were puffed knots of silk, or of precious embroidery, worn even by men of mean rank, at the cost of more than five pounds; who formerly had worn gilt copper shoe-buckles.

In the new and ruinous excess of the use of tobacco, many consumed three or four hundred pounds a year. James, who perceived the inconveniences of this sudden luxury in the nation, tried to discountenance it, although the purpose went to diminish his own scanty revenue. Nor was this attack on the abuse of tobacco peculiar to his Majesty, although he has been so ridiculed for it; a contemporary publication has well described the mania and its consequences. “The smoak of fashion hath

quite blown away the smoak of hospitalitie, and turned the chimneys of their forefathers into the noses of their children.”* The King also reprobated the finical embarrassments of the new fashions, and seldom wore new clothes. When they brought him a Spanish hat, he flung it away with scorn, swearing he never loved them nor their fashions; and when they put roses on his shoes he swore too, “ that they should not make him a ruffe-footed dove; a yard of penny ribbon would serve that turn.”

The sudden wealth which seems to have rushed into the nation in this reign of peace, appeared in massy plate and

* The Peace-Maker, 1618.

jewels, and in “ prodigal marriage-portions, which were grown in fashion among the nobility and gentry, as if the skies had rained plenty.” Such are the words of Hacket, in his Memorial of the Lord-Keeper Williams. Enormous wealth was often accumulated. An usurer died worth £400,000.; Sir Thomas Compton, a citizen, left, it is said, £800,000., and his heir was so overcome with this sudden irruption of wealth, that he lost his senses; and Cranfield, a citizen, became the Earl of Middlesex.

The continued peace, which produced this rage for dress, equipage, and magnificence, appeared in all forms of riot and excess; corruption bred

corruption. The industry of the nation was not the commerce of the many, but the arts of money-traders confined to the suckers of the state; and the unemployed and dissipated, who were every day increasing the population in the capital, were a daring petulant race, described by a contemporary as “ persons of great expense, who having run themselves into debt, were constrained to run into faction; and defend themselves from the danger of the law.* These appear to have enlisted under some shew of privilege among the nobility, and the metropolis was often shaken by parties, calling themselves Roaring-boys, Bravadoes, Roysters,

* Five Years of King James. Harl. Misc.

and Bonaventures.* Such were some of the turbulent children of peace, whose fiery spirits, could they have found their proper vent, had been soldiers of fortune, as they were younger brothers, distressed often by their own relatives; and wards ruined by their own guardians;† all these were clamorous for bold piracies on the Spaniards: a visionary island, and a secret mine, would often disturb the dreams of these unemployed youths, in the pacific reign of James I. Such felt that

* A. Wilson's List of James I. p. 28.

† That ancient oppressive institution of the Court of Wards then existed; and Massinger, the great painter of our domestic manners in this reign, has made it the subject of one of his interesting dramas.

————— in this plenty
And fat of peace, our young men ne'er were
train'd

To martial discipline, and our ships unrigg'd

Rot in the harbour.

MASSINGER.

The idleness which rusts quiet minds, effervesces in fiery spirits pent up together, and the loiterers in the environs of a court, surfeiting with peace, were quick at quarrel. It is remarkable, that in the pacific reign of James I. never was so much blood shed in brawls, nor duels so tremendously barbarous. Hume observed this circumstance, and attributes it to "the turn that the romantic chivalry, for which the nation was formerly so renowned, had lately taken." An inference probably drawn from the extraordinary

duel between Sir Edward Sackville, afterwards Lord Dorset, and the Lord Bruce.* These two gallant youths had lived as brothers, yet could now resolve not to part without destroying each other; the narrative, so wonderfully composed by Sackville, still makes us shudder at each blow received and given. Books were published to instruct them by a system of quarrelling, “to teach young gentlemen when they are before-hand and when behind-hand;” thus they incensed and incited those youths of hope and promise, whom Lord Bacon, in his charge on

* It may be found in the popular pages of the Guardian; there first printed from a MS. in the library of the Harleys.

Duelling, calls, in the language of the poet, *Auroræ filii*, the sons of the morning,—who often were drowned in their own blood ! But, on a nearer inspection, when we discover the personal malignity of these hasty quarrels, the coarseness of their manners, and the choice of weapons and places, in their mode of butchering each other, we must confess that they rarely partake of the spirit of chivalry. One gentleman biting the ear of a templar, or switching a poltroon lord ; another sending a challenge to fight in a saw-pit ; or to strip to their shirts, to mangle each other, were sanguinary duels, which could only have fermented in the disorders of the times, amidst that wanton

pampered indolence, which made them so petulant and pugnacious. His Majesty published a voluminous edict, which exhibits many proofs that it was the labour of his own hand, and some magnificent periods, whose structure discovers they were formed to his own ear, for the same dignity, the same eloquence, the same felicity of illustration embellish the state-papers.* Even

* “ A publication of his Majestie’s edict and seuere censure against private combats and combatants, &c. 1613.” It is a volume of about 150 pages. As a specimen of the royal style, I transcribe two passages.

“ The pride of humours, the libertie of times, the conniuencie of magistrates, together with a kind of prescription of impunity, hath bred ouer all this kingdome, not only an opinion among the weakest, but a constant beleefe among many, that

against this evil, James, who rarely consented to shed blood, condemned an irascible lord to suffer the ignominy of the cord.

But, while extortion and monopoly prevailed among the monied men, and a hollow magnificence among the gentry, bribery had tainted even the lords.

desire to be reputed among the wisest, of a certain freedome left to all men vpon earth by Nature, as their *birth-right* to defend their reputations with their swords, and to take reuenge of any wrong either offered or apprehended in that measure, which their owne inward passion or affection doth suggest without any further prooffe; so as the challenge be sent in a civil manner, though without leave demanded of the *sovereign*, &c."

The King employs a bold and poetical metaphor to describe duelling—to turn this hawk into a singing bird, clip its wings, and cage it. "By

All were hurrying on in a stream of venality, dissipation, and want; and the nation, amidst the prosperity of the kingdom in a long reign of peace, was nourishing in its breast the secret seeds of discontent and turbulence.

Of the prevalent vices of the age not one was the King's; his infirmities

comparing forraine mischiefes with home-bred accidents, it will not be hard to judge into what region this bolde bird of audacious presumption, in dealing blowes so confidently, will mount, if it bee once let flie, from the breast wherein it lurkes. And therefore it behoveth justice both to keep her still in her own close cage, with care that she learn neuer any other dittie then *Est bene*; but withall, that for preuention of the worst that may fall out, wee clippe her wings, that they grow not too fast. For according to that of the Proverb, *It is labour lost to lay nets before the eyes of winged fowles,*" &c. p. 13.

were not those of extortion, or bribery, or pomp ; he lived without shew, and could not afford to maintain a court. The evils of these luxuriant times were of quick growth ; and, as fast as they sprung, the Father of his people encountered them by his proclamations, that, during those long intervals of parliamentary recess, were to be enforced as laws : but they passed away as morning dreams over a happy, but a thoughtless and wanton people.

The King was himself amazed at the disorders and discontents he at length discovered ; and, in one of his later speeches, has expressed a mournful disappointment :

“ And now, I confess, that when I looked before upon the face of the government, *I thought, as every man would have done*, that the people were never so happy as in my time; but even, as at divers times I have looked upon many of my coppices, riding about them, and they appeared, on the outside, very thick and well-grown unto me, but, when I turned into the midst of them, I found them all bitten within, and full of plains and bare spots; like the apple or pear, fair and smooth without, but when you cleave it asunder, you find it rotten at heart. Even so this kingdom, the *external* government being as good as ever it was, and I am sure as learned judges as ever it had, and I hope as honest administering justice within it; and for peace, both at home and abroad, more settled, and longer lasting, than ever any before; together with as great plenty as ever: so, as it may be thought, every man might sit in safety under his own vine and fig-tree,” &c. &c.*

But while we see this king of peace surrounded by national grievances, and

* Rushworth, Vol. I, 29; sub anno 1621.

that “ this fair coppice was very thick and well-grown,” yet was it loud in murmurs, to what cause are we to attribute them ? Shall we exclaim with Catharine Macaulay against “ the despotism of James,” and “ the intoxication of his power ?”—a monarch, who did not even enforce the proclamations or edicts his wisdom dictated ;* and, as Hume has observed, while vaunting his prerogative, had not a single regi-

* James I. said, “ I will never offer to bring a new custom upon my people without the people’s consent ; like a good physician tell them what is amiss, if they will not concur to amend it, yet I have discharged my part.” Among the difficulties of this king was that of being a foreigner, and amidst the contending factions of that day the “ British Solomon” seems to have been unjustly reproached for his Scottish partialities.

ment of guards to maintain it. Must we agree even with Hume, to reproach the King with his indolence and love of amusement,—“ particularly of hunting?”*

The King's occasional retirements to Royston and Newmarket have even been surmised to have borne some analogy to the horrid Capræa of Tiberius; but a witness has accidentally detailed the

* La Boderie, the French ambassador, complains of the King's frequent absences; but James did not wish too close an intercourse with one who was making a French party about Prince Henry, and whose sole object was to provoke a Spanish war; the King foiled the French intriguer; but has incurred his contempt for being “timid and irresolute.” James's cautious neutrality was no merit in the Frenchman's eye.

La Boderie resided at our court from 1606 to 1611, and his “Ambassades,” in 5 vols. are interesting in English history.

King's uniform life in these occasional seclusions. James I. withdrew at times from public life, but not from public affairs; and hunting, to which he then gave alternate days, was the cheap amusement and requisite exercise of his sedentary habits: but the chase only occupied a few hours. A part of the day was spent by the King in his private studies; another at his dinners, where he had a reader, and was perpetually sending to Cambridge for books of reference; state-affairs were transacted at night; for it was observed, at the time, that his secretaries sat up later at night, in those occasional retirements, than when they were at London.* I have noticed, that the state-papers

* Hacket's *Scrinia Reserata*, Part I. 27.

were composed by himself, that he wrote letters on important occasions without consulting any one ; and that he derived little aid from his secretaries. James was probably never indolent ; but the uniform life and sedentary habits of literary men usually incur this reproach from those real idlers, who bustle in a life of nothingness. While no one loved more the still-life of peace than this studious monarch, whose habits formed an agreeable combination of the contemplative and the active life, study and business—no king more zealously tried to keep down the growing abuses of his government, by personally concerning himself in the protection of the subject.*

* As evidences of this zeal for reform, I throw

Let us detect, among the modern decriers of the character of James I.

into this note some extracts from the MS. letters of contemporaries.—Of the King's inteference between the judges of two courts about prohibitions, Sir Dudley Carleton gives this account: “The King played the best part in collecting arguments on both sides, and concluded that he saw much endeavour to draw water to their several mills; and advised them to take moderate courses, whereby the good of the subject might be more respected than their particular jurisdictions. The King sat also at the Admiralty, to look himself into certain disorders of government there: he told the lawyers, ‘he would leave hunting of hares, and hunt them in their quirks and subtilities, with which the subject had been too long abused.’”—MS. Letter of Sir Dudley Carleton.

In Winwood's Memorials of State there is a letter from Lord Northampton, who was present at one of these strict examinations of the King; and his language is warm with admiration: the letter, being a private one, can hardly be suspected of court flattery. “His Majesty hath in

those contradictory opinions, which start out in the same page; for the conviction of truth flashed on the eyes of those who systematically vilified him, and must often have pained them; while it embarrassed and confused those, who, being of no party, yet had adopted the popular notions. Even Hume is at variance with himself; for he censures

person, with the greatest dexterity of wit, and strength of argument, that mine ears ever heard, compounded between the parties of the civil and ecclesiastical courts; who begin to comply, by the King's sweet temper, on points that were held to be incompatible."—Winwood's Mem. III. 54.

In his progresses through the country, if any complained of having received injury from any of the court, the King punished, or had satisfaction made to the wronged, immediately.

James for his indolence, &c. “ which prevented him making any progress in the practice of foreign politics, and diminished that regard which all the neighbouring nations had paid to England during the reign of his predecessor,” p. 29. Yet this philosopher observes afterwards, on the military character of Prince Henry, at p. 63, that, “ had he lived, he had probably promoted *the glory, perhaps not the felicity, of his people.* The unhappy prepossession of men in favour of ambition, &c. engages them into such pursuits *as destroy their own peace, and that of the rest of mankind.*” This is true philosophy, however our politicians may comment, and however the military

may command the state. Had Hume, with all the sweetness of his temper, been a philosopher on the throne, himself had probably incurred the censure he passed on James I. and had been satisfied,—to be happy and to diffuse happiness. Another important contradiction in Hume, deserves detection. The King, it seems, “boasted of his management of Ireland as his masterpiece.” According to the accounts of Sir John Davies, whose political works are still read, and whom Hume quotes, James I. “in the space of nine years made greater advances towards the reformation of that kingdom than had been effected in more than four centuries;” on this Hume adds that the

King's “ *vanity* in this particular was not without foundation.” Thus in describing that wisest act of a sovereign, the art of humanising his ruder subjects, so unfortunate is James, that even his most skilful apologist, influenced by popular prepossessions, employs a degrading epithet—and yet he, who had indulged a sarcasm on the *vanity* of James, in closing his general view of his wise administration in Ireland, is carried away by his nobler feelings.—“ Such were the arts,” exclaims the historian, “ by which James introduced humanity and justice among a people who had ever been buried in the most profound barbarism. Noble cares! much superior to the vain and criminal

glory of conquests.” Let us add, that had the genius of James I. been war-like, had he commanded a battle to be fought and a victory to be celebrated, popular historians, the panders of ambition, had adorned their pages with the bloody trophies ; but the peace the monarch cultivated ; the wisdom which dictated the plan of civilization, and the persevering arts which put it into practice, these are the still virtues, which give no motion to the *spectacle* of the historian, and are even forgotten in his pages.

What were the painful feelings of Catharine Macaulay, in summing up the character of James I. ! The King has even extorted from her a confession,

that “ his conduct in Scotland was unexceptionable ,” but “ despicable in his Britannic government.” For a man, who, from his first to his last day, was always the same, the change appears to the sober historian as sudden, as the pen of the writer could form the idea. She tells us he affected “ a sententious wit ;” but she adds, that it consisted “ only of quaint and stale conceits.” We need not take the word of Mrs. Macaulay, since we have so much of this “ sententious wit” recorded, and of which probably she knew little. Forced to confess that James’s education had been “ a more learned one than is usually bestowed on princes,” we find how useless it is to educate

princes at all ; for this “ more learned education” made this prince “ more than commonly deficient in all the points he pretended to have any knowledge of.” This incredible result gives no encouragement for a prince, having a Buchanan for his tutor. Smollet, having compiled the popular accusations of the “ vanity, the prejudices, the littleness of soul,” of this abused monarch, surprises one in the same page by discovering enough good qualities to make something more than a tolerable king. “ His reign, though ignoble to himself, was happy to his people, who were enriched by commerce, felt no severe impositions, while they made considerable progress in their

liberties." So that, on the whole, the nation appears to have had all the reason they have so fully exercised in deriding and vilifying a sovereign, who had made them prosperous at the price of making himself contemptible ! I shall notice another writer, of an amiable character, as an evidence of the influence of popular prejudice, and the effect of truth.

When James went to Denmark to bring the queen, he passed part of his time among the learned ; but, such was his habitual attention in studying the duties of the sovereign, that he closely attended the Danish courts of justice ; and Daines Barrington, in his curious "Observations on the Statutes,"

mentions, that the King borrowed from the Danish code three statutes for the punishment of criminals. But so provocative of sarcasm is the ill-used name of this monarch, that our author could not but shrewdly observe, that James “ spent more time in those courts, than in attending upon his destined consort.” Yet this is not true: the King was jovial there, and was as indulgent a husband as he was a father. Osborne even censures James for once giving marks of his uxoriousness! But while Daines Barrington degrades, by unmerited ridicule, the honourable employment of the “ British Solomon,” he becomes himself perplexed at the truth that flashes on his eyes. He

expresses the most perfect admiration of James I. whose statutes he declares “deserve much to be enforced; nor do I find any one which hath the least tendency to extend the prerogative, or abridge the liberties and rights of his subjects.” He who came to scoff remained to pray. Thus a lawyer, in examining the laws of James I. concludes by approaching nearer to the truth: the step is a bold one. He says, “*It is at present a sort of fashion to suppose that this king, because he was a pedant, had no real understanding, or merit.*” Had Daines Barrington been asked for proofs of the pedantry of James I. he had still been more perplexed; but what can be more convincing

than a lawyer, on a review of the character of James I. being struck, as he tells us, by “ his desire of being instructed in the English law, and holding frequent conferences for this purpose with the most eminent lawyers,—as Sir Edward Coke, and others !” Such was the monarch whose character is perpetually reproached for indolent habits, and for exercising arbitrary power !

But let us leave these moderns perpetuating traditional prejudices, and often to the fiftieth echo, still sounding with no voice of its own, to learn what the unprejudiced contemporaries of James I. thought of the cause of the disorders of their age. They were alike struck by the wisdom and the zeal of

the monarch, and the prevalent discontents of this long reign of peace. At first, says the continuator of Stowe, all ranks but those “ who were settled in piracy,” as he designates the cormorants of war, and curiously enumerates their classes, “ were right joyful of the peace ; but, in a few years afterwards, all the benefits were generally forgotten, and the happiness of the general peace of the most part contemned.” The honest Annalist accounts for this unexpected result, by the natural reflection —“ Such is the world’s corruption, and man’s vile ingratitude.”* My philosophy enables me to advance but little beyond. A learned contemporary, Sir

* Stowe’s Annals, p. 845.

Symond D'Ewes, in his manuscript diary, notices the death of the monarch, whom he calls "our learned and peaceable sovereign."—"It did not a little amaze me to see all men generally slight and disregard the loss of so mild and gentle a prince, which made me even to feel, that the ensuing times might yet render his loss more sensible, and his memory more dear unto posterity." Sir Symond censures the King for not engaging in the German war to support the Palsgrave, and maintain "the true church of God;" but deeper politicians have applauded the King for avoiding a war, in which he could not essentially have served the interests of the rash prince, who had assumed the

title of King of Bohemia.* “ Yet,” adds Sir Symond, “ if we consider his virtues and his learning, his augmenting the liberties of the English, rather than his oppressing them by any unlimited or illegal taxes and corrosions, his death deserved more sorrow and condolment from his subjects than it found.”†

Another contemporary author, Wilson, has not ill-traced the generations of this continued peace ; “ peace begot plenty, plenty begot ease and wantonness, and ease and wantonness begot poetry, and poetry swelled out into that

* See Sir Edward Walker’s Hist. Discourses, p. 321; and Barrington’s Observ. on the Statutes, who says, “ For this he deserves the highest praise and commendation from a nation of islanders.”

† Harl MSS. 646.

bulk in this king's time which begot monstrous satyrs." Such were the lascivious times, which, dissolving the ranks of society in a general corruption, created on one part the imaginary and unlimited wants of prosperity ; and, on the other, produced the riotous children of indolence, and the turbulent adventurers of want. The rank luxuriance of this reign was a steaming hot-bed of peace, which proved to be the seed-plot of that revolution which was reserved for the unfortunate son.

In the subsequent reign a poet seems to have taken a retrospective view of the age of peace of James I. contemplating on its results in his own disastrous times—

————— States that never know
 A change but in their growth, which a long peace
 Hath brought unto perfection, are like steel,
 Which being neglected will consume itself
 With its own rust; so doth Security
 Eat through the hearts of states, while they are
 sleeping
 And lulled into false quiet.

NABBS'S HANNIBAL AND SCIPIO.

Thus the continued peace of James I.
 had calamities of its own! Are we to
 attribute them to the King? It has
 been usual with us, in the solemn ex-
 piations of our history, to convert the
 sovereign into the scape-goat for the
 people; the historian, like the priest of
 the Hebrews, laying his hands on
 Azazel,* the curses of the multitude

* The Hebrew name, which Calmet translates
Bouc Emissaire; and we 'Scape Goat, or rather
Escape Goat.

are heaped on that devoted head. And thus the historian conveniently solves all ambiguous events; parties grow reconciled together; few ever look into that body, of which himself forms a part; while factious leaders, advocating all the virtues under heaven, cautiously conceal from the people their errors, their passions, and their crimes. Yet it has not always been arbitrary power which has forced the people into the dread circle of their fate, seditions, rebellions, and civil wars; nor always oppressive taxation, which has given rise to public grievances. Such were not the crimes of James I. Amidst the full blessings of peace, the people has shewn how easily they corrupt them-

selves ; and how a philosopher on the throne, and the father of his people, shall live without exciting gratitude, and die without inspiring regret—unregarded, unremembered !

The following contemporary Epitaph on the death of James I. has great poetical merit, and may with some propriety close this Inquiry; another evidence of the feelings of his contemporaries.

Those that have eyes, awake and weep,
For He, whose waking wrought our sleep
Is fallen asleep, and shall never
Awake again, till waked for ever.

Death's iron hand hath closed those eyes
Which were at once three kingdoms spies ;
Both to foresee, and to prevent
Dangers so soon as they are meant.

That Head whose working brain alone
Wrought all men's quiet, but his own,
Now lies at rest ; oh let him have
The peace he purchased in his grave.

If that no Naboth all his reign
Was for his fruitful vineyard slain ;
If no Uriah lost his life
For having had so fair a wife,

Then let no Shemei's curses wound
His honour, or prophane his ground ;
Let no black-mouth, no rank-breathed cur
Peaceful James his ashes stir.

For his day's toil and his night's watches,
For the crazed sleep he stole by snatches ;
For two fair kingdoms, joined in one ;
For all he did, or meant to have done ;

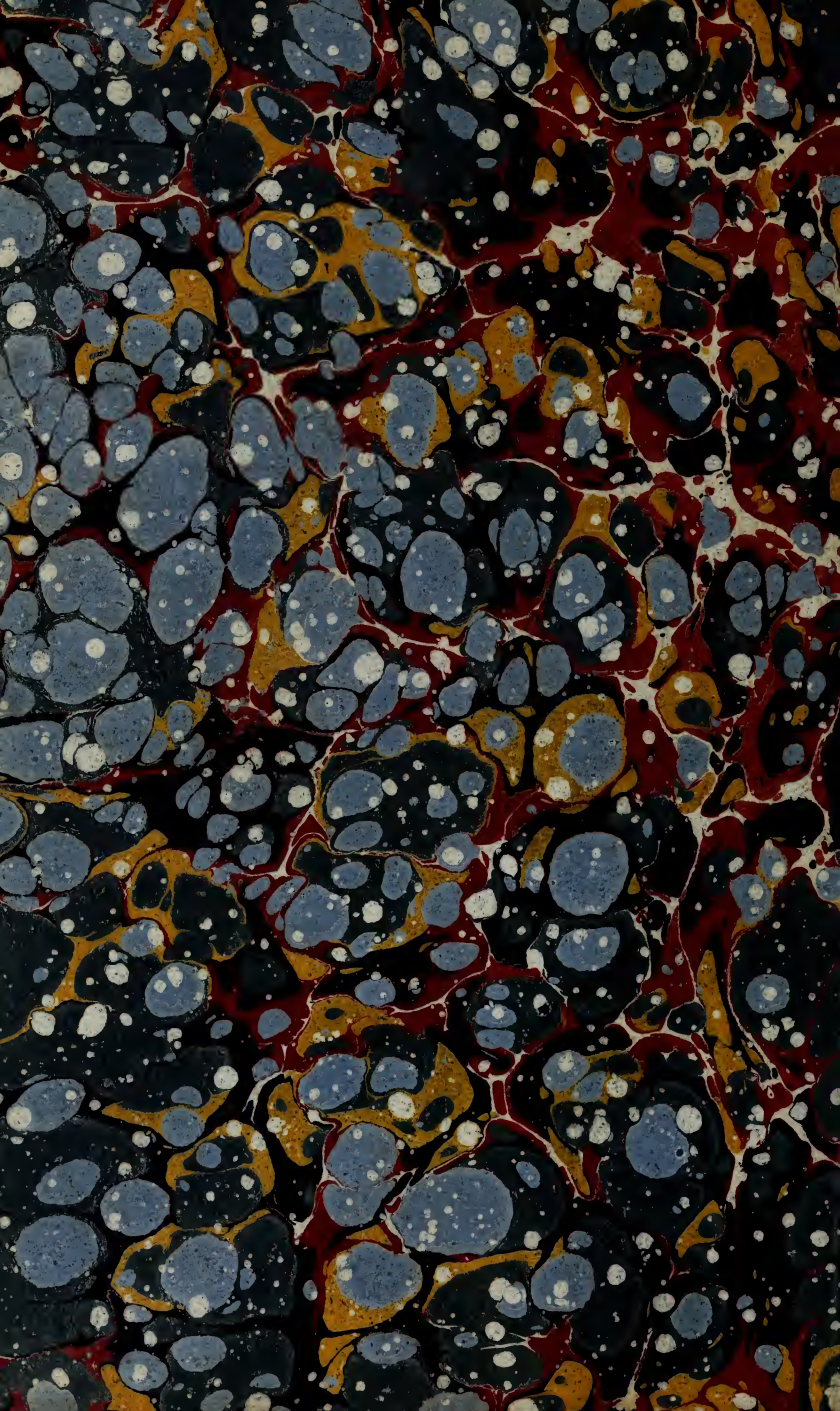
Do this for Him ; write on his dust,—
King James the Peaceful and the Just.

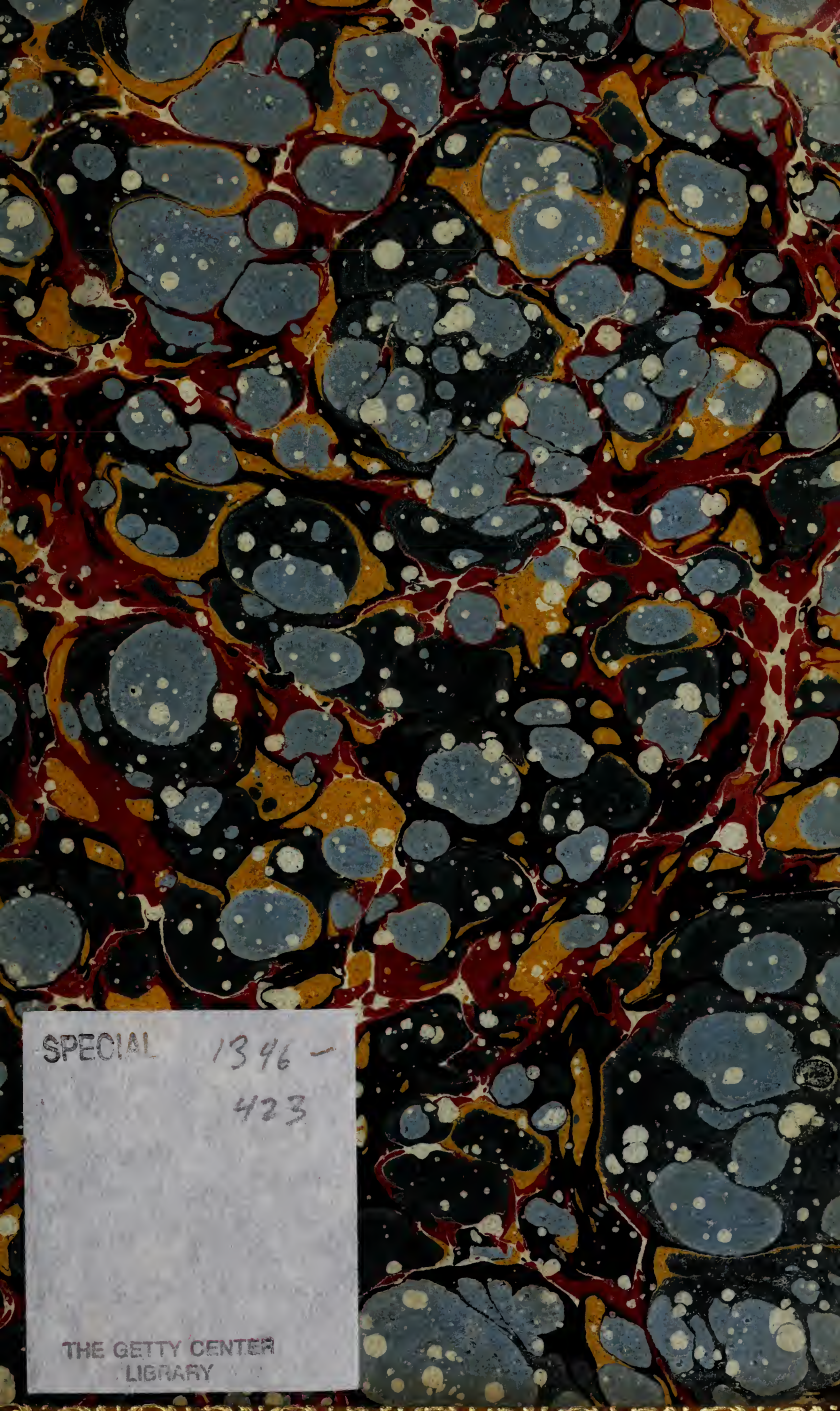
THE END.











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